THE Unreaſonableneſs OF ATHEISM Made Manifeſt;

In a Diſcourſe, written by the Command of a Perſon of Honour.

By Sir CHARLES WOLSELEY, Baronet.

Omnis homo, eo ipſo quod rationalis conditus eſt, ex ipſa ratione illum, qui ſe condidit, Deum eſſe colligere debet. S. Greg. in Mor. &c.

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DEnsis & continuis, iisque validissimis Argumentis Atheismum exagitat iste *Tractatus* cui Titulus, *The Unreasonableness of Atheism made manifest.*

Imprimatur,

10 *Maii* 1669.

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My Lord,

THeſe Papers, like *Orphans* meanly deſcended, are glad to forget their Original, and Innoble themſelves with the *Adoption* of your Commands. The Title you have to them transfers a *relative Honour*, which is the whole of what they claim to inherit. You have truſted the *richeſt Jewel* in the Hands of a mean *Artiſt*, by whom 'twill be ſet with great diſadvantage. You have committed the *nobleſt* of Subjects to a Priſon of *low Thoughts*; where 'tis debaſed beneath it ſelf, like a rich Soil under a barren *Genius*. The reproach of the higheſt Thoughts, in their beſt Exerciſe, ſuffers here a Confinement to the *ſtraits* of a very narrow capacity. However, he that *Liſts* himſelf in the defence of Truth, though he *Fight* ill, is ſure to be of the Conquerours ſide. And he that *Duels* an *Atheiſt*, can never want a good *Second*: The weakeſt defence often makes a ſtand, and gives occaſion to greater Forces to ralley. Sometimes the happy

Sling of a Stone may Stab a *Goliah* in the Forehead, and Rout his whole Rere-guard.

Every Man cannot lead an *Army* for Truth, but all Men should follow the *Camp*; no Man should ever meet an *Atheist* unarm'd, but wear a constant Weapon in his understanding to Fight him. Each Man combates not the same way; I have provided a *Sling* for such as cannot bear *heavier Armour*; Notions that lie *even* to mean capacities; that he may be able to *bolt his Door* against an *Atheist*, that cannot *build a Cittadel* for his defence. When *Atheism* so loudly batters us on all sides, 'tis time to cast our eyes every way. The weakest places should be first secured; and such who can least make a resistance, should be most taken care for. This is the *Post* I have undertaken, designed me by my own disability to do better. I have chose to help those that are least knowing; to interpose my *feeble Aid* where I see the weakest front, and the worst preparation to endure a shock: Nor will you blame me, if I am pleased with a *Subject*, where I am sure to live by the warmth of reflection; if I contend for the lowest employment; am proud of any admission into such a service, where the meanest *Livery* carries *Grandeur*, and the *lowest Officer* must

muſt needs be a dignified Perſon. This choice, as it beſt ſecures me againſt the juſteſt of Fears, [that ſo noble a Cauſe ſhould ſuffer by a weak defence, in the hand of an impotent Champion;] ſo the ſuitableneſs of it to the *moſt of my ſelf*, gives me hopes of the ſame acceptance he found under the Law with *the Sacrifice of a Turtle*, that wanted a better Offering. *My Lord*, This prepares you to know, I diſclaim the vanity of *inſtructing you* by this Diſcourſe. 'Tis compoſed for *you to correct*; for ignorance, *to learn* by. You eſpouſed the Concerns of others, when you commanded this from me. Should I attempt to make your *Lordſhip* a better *Divine*, I ſhould ſhake hands with that fooliſh *Orator*, who being to make an Oration before *Hannibal*, went about to inſtruct him in the art of War. 'Tis the many unlearned and unſtable, who ſteer not by the Compaſs of *right Reaſon*, but by the Winds of every falſe Notion, and every *deluding Sophiſm*, that challenge Diſcourſes of this kind and make them a Debt due from us. Thoſe that have been the guard of every Age, have ſtill encountered the predominant Humour. The World (in every Stage of it) has *beſmeared it ſelf* with ſome peculiar deformity; has corrupted into ſome *new* Diſtemper, or improved ſome *old*

Diſeaſe. We ſeem, at once, greedily to have ſwallowed the dregs of the *whole*, and to have *epitomized* the Worlds *Apoſtacy* in the fatal Plague of *Atheiſm*. We skirmiſh not like other Ages, *to retail ſingle Truths*; but the *whole of Religion* lies at Stake with us. He that yields the Field to an *Atheiſt*, has at once betrayed all Divine Truth to the Block; and left the nobleſt property of his Soul in the hand of his worſt Enemy. All other Diſtempers naturally fall in here; they all iſſue themſelves into this infection: Men think it the *cheapeſt* way of becoming *vile*. The *troubles* Men are at from the efforts of Conſcience, and the convincing Aſpect of *ſome open-faced Truths*, have, by this, a ready conveyance, and ſeem ſhortly diſmiſſed out of the World. They that are *uneaſie under all Religion*, if they can once perſwade themſelves *there is no God*, think they have found a happy expedient to eaſe them of thoſe cares. This makes the knowledg of God, in theſe days, to be grown ſo cheap a *commodity*, and lie like a drug upon ſo many Mens hands; they will gladly *barter* it away for an empty Notion of *Atoms*, or any plauſible trifle; the worſt Ware ſerves them, ſo it come in the room of Religion; they'l never *diſpute the terms*, if they can but *come to a bargain*; they think they have

have got all, and parted with nothing.

I am contending, by this small endeavour, some little to *antidote* the Poison of this Disease: to forbid the fury of such a *Phrenzie*; to speak to Men in the native Language of their own *Reason*; to meet with them in the *cool* of the day, and treat with them when the heat of this Distemper may be somewhat abated.

The Man that turns from God, and disowns him, *unhinges* himself from the best of his own being; is highly unjust to his Maker, and forfeits his own interest towards himself. It were not more unnatural, should the *leaves* of a Tree drop *Poison* upon their own *root*: nor less destructive should the Earth refuse the warmth of the Sun. The Glory of Man lies in his Supreme Head; 'tis his *descent* that innobles him: 'tis the Divine Image that greatens him, and crowns him *King of the Universe*. Whoever disclaims such an *original*, and makes it his choice to derive himself from the *nothing of chance*, has forfeited the *best of himself*; has done his utmost to depose himself from his own native Dignity, and becomes the natural prey of every Mans contempt. Nor can we deny the *Existence of God*, without some way assaulting our selves. He must first design a *Rape* upon his own

Reason, that resolves to have nothing *above him.* Our reasonable part disowns all Friendship to an *Atheist*, and is a continual *Herald* proclaiming God in the World. The bottom of all sober thoughts and enquiries bring Men still to *Divinity.* How meanly does the *Atheist Philosophize* when he is contesting with God, when he is projecting an Image, and framing an Idol to supply his place! when he is creating, in his own *intellect*, an Eternity for the World! or when he is *equipping his Atoms* into such a posture, and contriving them into such a *Motion*, as might oblige the World with a donation of its Being! when, instead of a *Deity* in the *greatest hights* above us, he will needs derive us from somewhat in *the lowest Depths* beneath us! Though God cannot be the Object of a *natural eye*, yet he always stands full in the eye of our Reason; has chosen to convey himself to us by that *Noblest Faculty*, as the most comprehensive part of our own Beings, and so the most suitable to his Being: there we know so much of him as fills the *All* of our best capacity; and by the safest way we have of knowing enough, assures us that such a *Being* does exist. Should he descend to any other converse with us, it would rather *amaze* than *satisfie*, and more affright us,

us, than inform us. How vain is he that denies there is a God, becauſe he cannot graſp the *whole of his Being!* When we meet with nothing but has ſomewhat above us. Were it reaſonable to deny the truth of any *Material Being*, becauſe our thoughts can never land us beyond the laſt *diviſion of quantity?* What we can fully comprehend, we have the leaſt reaſon to adore. The Notions we have of God in our own ſouls, of an infinite and perfect Being, loudly proclaim to us our own incapacity to know the utmoſt of him. The *frame* of *our ſelves* is a curtain drawn between us and a full view of what is *infinite.* When we attempt too near approaches to things ſo much above us, we exceed the bounds of our own Beings, and gain nothing but the reproach of our own folly.

He that devotes himſelf to the ſervice of *Atheiſm*, will find he has *bored his ear* to the worſt of ſlavery: And when he thinks he is moſt at liberty, will find, he has made himſelf but his own *Priſon.* Whoever trades with another, or accoſts himſelf to be the *Atheiſt's Proſelyte*, makes an attempt ariſing from the worſt intention, and aiming at the moſt impracticable execution. He can never intend well, that would *ſue*

a *Divorce* between God and the World; that would rob the *one* of the Work of his Hands, and the *other* of the Reward of their Labours. He that allows Mankind no hope beyond *themselves*, imposeth a *Negative* upon their best expectation; makes the possession of the World very *uneasie*, without a prospect of some Reversion. The Disciple of an *Atheist* is bowed down to the worst of conditions; he rejects all hopes of a *happy futurity*, and stands all the ventures of a *future misery*. The Fundamentals of an *Atheist* are all begged Supposals. No Man can insure another that Negative, [That there is *no God*:] nor counter-secure him if he mistake. Should it ever appear that *God is*, all he has then gained, is an authority to himself to live ill here, and a security of being inchained as the highest Rebel hereafter.

Nor has he undertaken an *easie Province* that designs to shut God out of the World, and bolt the door fast upon him. He's more wisely at work that is busily stopping out the *Tide* with his foot, or he that first shuts up himself in the dark, and then forbids the Sun to shine. He that will compleat an *Atheist*, must have more than the consent of his *own will* to it; the forcible Evidences God has given in of Himself to our Reason,

ſon, muſt be firſt taken out of the way; *Conſcience* muſt be ſilenced; God muſt *withdraw* and give his conſent to the work. If *Reaſon* want an Anſwer, complain of its Doubts, the *Conſcience* enters its diſſent, and *God* puts in his claim; at the beſt of ſuch a caſe, a Man ſtands *divided againſt himſelf*. Yea, his *unruly Appetite* ſtands ſingle to conteſt all his ſober Refuſes; he becomes *certain* in *nothing*, and ſo is betrayed to unhappineſs in every thing. He that ſets up for an *Atheiſt*, ſeems one that *tells you he is ſo*, has a *mind to be ſo*, acts as if *he were ſo*, rather than one that *really is ſo*. His own Reaſon calls him a Fool that looks *beneath himſelf* for his Original. And he becomes a *Monſter* to his own Soul, that kneels to his own Deity, and makes himſelf his own Idol.

How far any Man ever yet ſailed in this *Mare mortuum*; how far ever God anſwered any Man according to this Folly, and (chuſing his Deluſion) left him to the waking Dream of an *Atheiſtical Faith*; let the *Atheiſt* himſelf then determine, when (without a diſturbance from God, his Conſcience, or his Reaſon) he has lived over his *own Being*, and at laſt finds, he has breathed himſelf into *nothing* but the *circular Motion* of the World.

My

My Lord, I have now enough disposed you to endure an *ill Seat*, by the *foul way* I have brought you to it. 'Tis not intended to detain you; the whole is but *a little Hut* set up to treat you with an hour or two's entertainment, and to be demolished as you please. The *worthy labours* of others might well tempt me to disobey you: nor should I have ventured upon this small recruit, but that I see the daily *Auxiliaries* the *Atheist* thrives by. I have industriously waved the disputing with other Mens Reason; and as little affected the plurality of *Quotations*. I have made little repetition of *Plato's Divine Sentences*; nor transcribed much of *Cicero's* excellent Tract *De Natura Deorum*; (the usual Ornaments of such Discourses.) Nor have I roused the *old Philosophers* much to assist me, who are yet generally the foes of an *Atheist*. All which I might well have undertaken, as being no appurtenant to the hardest part of this performance. I have rather chose to entertain the *Atheist* with such *plain Blows*, as my weak hand was able to bestow upon him: and to set before *Your Lordship* the coarse food of mine own labours, rather than feast you with other Mens dainties.

Before I come to close with the *Atheist*, and

and try the moſt of his ſtrength, I ſhall *attacque* him at ſome diſtance, and view ſome of his out-works. And it may happily be neither unpleaſing to *Your Lordſhip*, nor unuſeful to the Work in hand, if I firſt lay before you thoſe things, which to me, ſeem more eſpecially to have been in this Age, the ſteps that have gradually led to *Atheiſm*, and the unhappy promoters of ſo ſad a defection; and they will come under theſe ſeveral heads following. To all which I muſt premiſe, *That 'tis no way neceſſary, that ſuch who deny all ſupernatural Knowledg of God, ſhould thereby become open avowers of Atheiſm*, becauſe there are Principles of natural Religion, that do ſufficiently preſerve Men in their *Allegiance* to a Deity, without any thing Supernatural. But yet, where Men, in poſſeſſion of *Supernatural Revelation*, upon any account begin to oppoſe and reject it, as it moſt commonly ariſeth from a general diſlike to the Notion of a Deity and Religion; ſo it uſually ends in a total deſertion of both.

First, *To bottom all Religion upon humane Authority, and derive it from the Power and Pleaſure of Men*, tends (in the conſequences of it) to deſtroy all Religion, and at laſt to bring Men to no Religion. If we once take

take away *Divine Authority* from Religion, we have made an Inrode upon its best Defence. It will never be kept up, with any other interest in the *Consciences* of Men: and where 'tis not supported by the *Conscience*, 'tis ever tottering, and yields to the blasts of every *humane Pleasure*. If once it be taken for granted, that *the Scriptures have no Authority, but what the Civil Power gives them*, they will soon come, upon a Divine account, to have *none* at all. Nothing gratifies the *Atheist* more, when he is pulling down the Pillars of Religion, than positions of this nature. 'Tis to render the homage Men pay to Religion as a thing Divine, upon even terms with the Reverence Men pay to an Idol. When they come at last to consider, 'tis *nothing in the World*; that is, 'tis nothing of what they in their Worship take it to be; that 'tis a thing of humane make; a piece of Wood, or a piece of Stone: that has nothing upon it but the stamp of Mens Artifice: and that 'tis not an intrinsique worth, but the Art and Pleasure of Men that give it its Authority; their Reverence will, in time, wear off from it, and they will come to value it just as it is. Dangerous therefore to the concerns of Religion, are the consequences of such assertions as tend this way. An Author,

not

not a little populat, amongſt many other expreſſions that complexion the ſame way, hath this paſſage; ſayes he, *The Apoſtles could not make their Writings Obligatory Canons, without the help of the Soveraign Civil Power: and therefore the Scripture of the New-Teſtament is there only Law, where the Civil Power hath made it ſo.* Hobs *Leviathan, Chap.* 24. *p.* 285. And in his 38 Chapter he tells us plainly: *'Tis impoſſible a Commonwealth ſhould ſtand, where any greater Rewards and Puniſhments are talked of, than what the Civil Soveraign is able to diſpence, which is preſent Life and preſent Death*; and therefore ſayes that *Eternal Life, and Eternal Death, being higher Rewards and Puniſhments, are things well to be conſidered of, what is meant by them!* And toward the end of the Chapter, concludes; *There is no ground to believe any one Man ſhould have an Eternal Life in Puniſhment.* Which things correſpond well to the deſcription he gives of Religion it ſelf in the beginning of his Book, where he tells us, in his ſixth Chapter, in theſe words, that *fear of Power inviſible, feigned by the mind, or imagined from tales publickly told, is Religion.* Firſt, ſuch Notions as theſe about the *Scripture* make it impoſſible, the *Goſpel* ſhould ever be *legally* preached in any *Heathen State*; for where

'tis

'tis *no Law*, it can never be lawfully preached as a Law. And Secondly, Whoever is so Discipled to them as to believe, 'tis in the Power of every State whether the Gospel shall be *Authentique* or not, must needs throw off all Divine respect to it, and be in a very fair way to trouble himself little with any Devotion arising from it. The whole of these Principles point Men to direct *Atheism*, and have accordingly found a grateful acceptance amongst such as travel that way. The plain effect of them is, to make the rise and termination of *all Religion* to be from Civil and Humane Authority, and a Power inherent in, and derived *from this visible World*; and that all things *beyond this World* are meerly fabulous, and such *Phantasms*, as Men have fondly conceived and created within themselves. How can the *Atheist* have better Service done him, than to have a *nullity* put upon the *Divinity of all Religion*; and to have those great supporters of it in the minds of Men (Eternal Rewards and Punishments) secretly undermined and demolished? The ultimate result of all these *Documents*, is, that Men come at last firmly to believe nothing, and so freely practise any thing.

Secondly, *When a practical conformity to the plain common Truths of Religion is rendered a thing*

a thing to be derided, and turned into a common mockery; as a thing ſoppiſh and ridiculous; 'tis a plain preſage of Atheiſm. Though it be done to the practice of thoſe, whoſe principles, in other things, we never ſo much diſlike; and upon the account of a Religion, never ſo much otherwiſe miſtaken; 'tis the ready way to make men ſerve all Religion ſo, and at laſt, to deride at the whole ſyſteme of it under any opinions or practices whatſoever. 'Tis not reaſonable to believe, that there ſhould be any other bottom of a mans denying himſelf in forbearing to ſin, and doing ſuch things, as would otherwiſe pleaſe and advantage him, but *Religion* and Conſcience, and that having its riſe from the ſence of an *eternal Being above him*, that forbids ſuch things. And therefore, when a man lies under contempt for ſo doing, the truth of ſuch proceedings is to mock at all notion of a Deity, and the Being of God himſelf. As the chiefeſt, ſo the moſt amiable part of Religion lies in the *practick*; if that once come under *contempt* all the *Theory* of it will ſoon expire. He that will deride a man becauſe he will not *lye* for his advantage, and *be unjuſt* for his gain, nor be *prophane* to pleaſe another, will ſcorn him much more if he diſcourſe of a *Trinity in Heaven*, and mens *ri-*

ſing again after death. Matters of this nature ſhould be *ſacredly* kept from *prophane* contempt. Such things as are the *common coin* of all Chriſtians, though they be done either upon *grounds miſtaken*, or *principles hypocritical*, yet they are well done for the bare act of them, and ſo far challenge encouragement. We muſt not pretend to ſuch a *Superiority* over the *rectitude* of mens judgements, or the *Sincerity* of mens intentions, as to take occaſion thereby to ſcorn all practice of Religion out of the world. When the moſt indiſputable parts of *Religion*; nay, the *practice of any Religion*, comes to be the publick ſport of mens Wit, and the triumph of common Drollery; when men deſign the exerciſe of their parts to find out the moſt appoſite ways to make Divinity the great object of publick deriſion and contempt, it cannot but preſage a drowning deluge of *Atheiſm*. Men can never be ſerious with that, and *reverence* it at one time, which they make the ſubject of their *ſcorn* at another. Render a Prince or a State *ridiculous before the people*, and once bring them under open contempt, and you will ſoon remove the peoples Obedience; and in that purſuit, ſoon debaſe Government it ſelf, to be trodden down, and trampled under foot. Things of this nature have inſenſibly begotten

begotten men into *Atheiſm*, and diſguſted them from all ſerioufneſs in Religion; and made a man of any Conſcience ſeem the higheſt emblem of abſurdity; and at laſt, men rather chuſe to ſay, *There is no God*, as thinking it every way more decent, than to retain a naked acknowledgment of one, and yet to act ſuch things as plainly contemn him, and carry an open defiance to him.

Thirdly, *The Multiplicity of Oaths that were, ſome late years paſt, amongſt us*: the taking and renouncing them, *backward* and *forward*, has been no uſeleſs friend to *Atheiſm*. This has deflowred our integrity, and taken away the Virginity of Conſcience; and made a dangerous invaſion upon all honeſty among men, and all Religion toward God. He that once comes to caſt off his reverence and dread of God in an Oath, which is the higheſt and neareſt Appeal to him, will caſt it off in any thing, and at laſt, come to declare open war with Conſcience in every thing. The Land mourns with *Atheiſm* becauſe of theſe *Oaths*. We muſt record it as none of the leaſt of our misfortunes in this Age, that Men have been ſo unhappily provoked and tempted in this matters of *Oaths*. For, either by oppoſing

Conſcience, or dallying with it, in ſo high a concern as an *Oath*, they have, at laſt, taken leave of all Religion; and have briefly reſolved all the doubts and diſputes about the ſeveral obligations ariſing from ſeveral *Oaths*, by thinking, that there is no obligation from any. The impoſing contrary *Oaths*, is ſo far from ſecuring any body, that it deceives every body. The laſt impoſer uſually attains the leaſt of his end. For men (to avoid the dreadful ſentence of Conſcience in ſuch caſes) recur to plain *Atheiſm*; and that ſets them beyond the reach of an *Oath*, or any other obligation whatſoever: And when we think we have tyed them up faſteſt, they break through all thoſe things, and as much deſpiſe them as *Sampſon* did his *green withs*. 'Tis the wiſdom of a ſtate to preſerve Conſcience as a ſacred Jewel; and eſpecially in that higheſt exerciſe of it in an *Oath*. Such who cannot be bound faſt to God by Oaths lawfully adminiſtred, will never be bound ſafe to their King, nor ſure one to another, 'Tis the *Atheiſm* that we groan under, that occaſions that common trade of Perjury, that is driven on amongſt thoſe, upon whoſe integrity to an *Oath* the *All* of our humane concerns depends. That reverence men had heretofore of an Oath, this age ſcoffs at. When, men by falſe

ſwearing

ſwearing and lying to God in the moſt ſolemn appeals to him, are grown into open hoſtility with him; they think *Atheiſm* the beſt way to determine the Controverſie. By that they hope to extinguiſh the trouble of what is paſt, and to ſecure themſelves in the quiet poſſeſſion of ſuch courſes for the future.

Fourthly, *The contempt that has been caſt upon the Scriptures, and all ſupernatural Revelation,* has opened a wide door to *Atheiſm.* Men ſeldom keep true to the principles of *natural* Religion, that caſt away all *ſupernatural* Revelation. Men have ſo kicked at what is ſupernatural, and ſo much queſtioned and doubted thoſe things, and the manner of their conveyance to the World; that at laſt they have combared their natural Light, and denied the truth of a Deity. We muſt not imagine ſupernatural Religion to be ſuch a thing, that 'tis not capable of oppoſition. The Devil has not ſo deſperate a game to play in the world: he has ſome *miſts* to bring men into, where he may couzen and miſlead them. God has not made the world ſo as to ſatisfie the captious queſtions of every froward perverſe diſſenter, that deſigns to himſelf diſ- ſatisfaction He has left us no anſwer to thoſe that ask, why he did not make the world in a day;

nay, why not by a word; which he could have done as well as to have taken *six days* time to do it in: nor why he made so many creatures that seem to be of no use; and others that seem to do nothing but hurt; and a thousand other such Questions. God has reserved such kind of Objections to the answer of his own Soveraignty. If men must needs know why God does not continually speak to the world, and *viva voce* determine every thing, and put all things out of doubt; if they must needs know why God does not come down, as he did upon Mount *Sinai*, to satisfie men of the truth of his Law; and why Christ does not often come down from Heaven, and work *Miracles* to confirm the truth of the Gospel; God hath intrusted no man with an answer to such impudent and absurd Questions. Nor would such men who ask such Questions, be probably more satisfied with such things, if they were done, than now they are. The *Jews* found a way to evade the Miracles of Christ, and to father them upon the Power of the Devil; and so to credit nothing he said. He that now calls for *Ocular* and *Mathematical* demonstrations about the Scriptures and the proof of them, (or else he will believe nothing, but look upon all supernatural Revelation as a fabulous story) 'tis as much

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as to ſay, he will not believe thoſe things, unleſs he have ſuch proofs of them, as are *impoſſible* to be had, and the nature of them will no way bear; which is all one as to ſay, he is poſitively reſolved before-hand not to believe them at all. Although we were not, at the firſt, eye-witneſſes of God's delivery of the Scriptures to the World, nor of thoſe Miracles by which they were confirm'd; nor have an Infallibility in each particular circumſtance of their Conveyance down to us; that is, we do not ſay that every *Tranſcriber*, and every *Printer* of them was, or is infallible; but that 'tis poſſible (after the utmoſt of all humane care) in a letter or a word, there may happen to be miſtakes (of which no other uſe can be made, but to quicken and continue our diligence about them;) yet for the whole *body of the Scriptures*, we have all the reaſon to ſatisfie us about the truth of them, that any thing, that we have not actually ſeen, is poſſibly capable of. And, ſetting aſide its own *innate worth*, and the evidence it carries with it of its own divine Authority, we have all the collateral proof of moral Teſtimony, that any ſuch thing can have. And upon that ſingle account, without any other (ſetting by all the effects of it) have as good reaſon to believe the truth of the

Scripture, as to believe any other thing whatſoever, that we our ſelves have not beheld. How ridiculous would he appear to be, that would believe nothing but what he has ſeen? deny all Records of things paſt; and the exiſtence of any part of the World now, but juſt what he has beheld? He that has lived in the remoteſt part of *England*, may be as ſure there is ſuch a place as *London*, as he can be of any *Mathematical* propoſition; for there is as much certainty in the kind of the one, as there is in the kind of the other; and both capable of certainty in their kind; and yet the one is not capable of the *ſame way of probation* with the other. He that will go about to perſwade me I may be couzened in ſuch a moral Belief, and cannot arrive at a certainty; I may, with as good reaſon, trouble him with objections, and provoke him to doubt of what he himſelf ſees; and tell him; Either his *eye ſight* may fail, or miſ-inform him; or elſe the object may be ſuch as may be purpoſely diſpoſed to couzen and delude his ſight; in the one a man hath nothing but the ſingle teſtimony of his *own eyes*; in the other the teſtimony of thouſands transferred to him upon unqueſtionable credit. The worſt deſigners againſt Religion cannot deny the *univerſal teſtimony of all ages* to the

the body of the Scripture: Even out of the mouths of its greateſt enemies it may be juſtified; who (labouring confute it, and overthrow the doctrine of it) have left us an undeniable teſtimony to the truth of the *fact* of it. Thoſe who moſt oppoſed it in the ages when it looked firſt abroad, had never the impudence to deny the *Being* of it; nor the being of it with ſuch circumſtances as enough juſtifie the Divine Authority of it. And for the differences in the *Copies* and *Tranſlations* of the Scripture it ſelf (which men have ſo magnified and multiplied to invalidate its Authority, and deſtroy the credit of the whole) after the utmoſt diligence of the moſt learned, in comparing all the *Copies*, and all the *Tranſlations* of thoſe *Copies*, that are extant, or can be found; and all the care that poſſibly could be taken therein, (and never was there ſo great exactneſs and care about any writing ſince the world began) and the utmoſt improvement of the moſt malicious objections that way; ſo eminent does the Providence of God appear in preſerving the Scriptures entire, that the differences and variations do appear ſo ſmall, ſo inconſiderable, and ſo far from undermining the whole; that they have not ſo much as in the leaſt ſhaken any *one Divine Truth*, or diſturbed

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us in our belief of any one point in Religion; but have poured out abundant shame upon those, who built their designs to ruine the Scriptures upon that foundation: and have rendred them equally wise, and equally ingenuous with such, who would deny the relation of a Book to its Author, and deny the whole of any Treatise, because of some small inconsiderable *Errata's* in the impression. Such things may gratifie peevish and froward persons, who gape for objections; but will never find acceptance with sober and unprejudic'd men. Let such who take the greatest pleasure to make the *Scriptures* the object of their contempt, consider but soberly with themselves, if there be any thing supernatural; if God has ever revealed himself further to the world, than in that knowledg he gave us of himself in our first make: (which we have abundant reason to believe he has) how could it be handed down to us upon more *credible* terms?

First, the Scripture it self, written in a way wholly becoming such an Author as God himself and no other; and in such a way as does plainly *spirare divinitatem*; with such Majesty, Authority, and Impartiality, as relate themselves to God; and with such positive *Predictions* in it, of things to come; and writing with that certainy

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about things many hundred years off remote and future, as if it were a Hiſtory of things paſt or preſent; and the punctual accompliſhments the whole world has been witneſs to of theſe Predictions; bears witneſs unto it ſelf. Thus *Iſaiah* propheſied of *Cyrus* by name, and foretold he ſhould conquer the *Babylonians*, and ruine their Monarchy, a hundred and four years before *Cyrus* was born. And other ſuch-like Predictions innumerable there are contained in them; which as they moſt evidently tell us there is a God, and ſomewhat above the World; ſo they unanſwerably declare the Scriptures to be his word.

Secondly, The whole *Doctrine* of the Scriptures; the Principles of it being ſuch, as are moſt ſuitable and agreeing to our natural Light, and that Image of God, and the diſtinguiſhing Taſte of good from evil, we received from God in our firſt conſtitution, is of the ſame conſideration. Nothing can be deviſed more uſeful and profitable for all publick *Societies*, and all private converſe, than the Principles the Scriptures offer to us. Nor did any thing ever ſo much heighten all natural Religion, and bring men to ſo neer a converſe with God, and ſo great a conformity on that account to him; or induce any thing ſo much for

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the common and general good of all Mankind. No man can well deny, but that he that lives a life conformed to the Scriptures, ſhall live moſt to God, beſt to himſelf, and moſt uſefully to all Mankind; and to the height of thoſe excellent Principles which all the ſober and ſerious men, ſince the world began, have juſtified and applauded.

Thirdly, The whole *matter of fact* about the Scripture, and the Miracles wrought to eſtabliſh them, deſcends to us with a general concurring Teſtimony from the ages wherein they were tranſacted. And we have as much to aſſure us and ſatisfie us in that, as ſuch a thing is capable of; as much indeed as can be had about a thing paſt and not ſeen by our ſelves; and ſo much as we ought fully to acquieſce in. *No matter of fact* about the Scripture can otherwiſe be proved to us that live in diſtant Ages: And matter of fact muſt neceſſarily belong to it and have its proof that way; unleſs the Bible had every Age a new edition, and were often re-delivered and re-printed from Heaven.

Fourthly, A *divine Power* there is attending the Scripture, to gain it an intereſt and reception in the world, which is peculiar to it ſelf, and nothing elſe can boaſt of. To thoſe, who by themſelves know there is ſuch

ſuch a *divine power* attending the Scriptures 'tis to them an infallible argument of the Truth of them, and to others that ſtand by, an argument of *high probability*; becauſe they hear many, who are ſober and ſerious, atteſting it, whoſe credit they have no reaſon to reject. And they themſelves in ſuch mens practice ſee the viſible effects of it, and a great part of the World converted by it.

Thoſe that will ſlight over all theſe things, and reſolve to deſpiſe and reject them: that will object againſt the firſt, and tell you, That the ſtyle of the Scripture is nothing, but an effect of their cunning and deſign, who intended to cheat the world by it, and ſo perſonated God as much as they could; That thoſe *Predictions* of things to come, were only put in to gain credit to it at the firſt, and have ſince, by chance, come to paſs; or elſe that men foreſaw them by the natural courſe of the ſtars. That ſay to the *ſecond*, they cannot find that excellency in the *Doctrine* of the Scriptures we ſpeak of; but rather find it interrupts and croſſes them in all thoſe things they take moſt delight and pleaſure in. That reject wholly the *third*, and throw away all belief of things paſt; and reſolve to credit nothing but what they ſee. That mock at

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the *fourth* (the Divine Power attending the Scripture) and deny the Being of any ſuch thing; think it a vain imagination; and tell you, That many *fabulous ſtories*, and falſe Religions, have equally gained upon the World; and found many that have religiouſly bowed down themſelves to them, and ſubmitted to deluding Impoſitions from them. Thoſe I ſay that will thus object and feed upon this kind of traſh; that find a way to convert into humour and diſeaſe all ſuch notions of things as are the ſatisfying food of ſober and reaſonable men; and reſolve to believe nothing they do not *like*; that will deny the truth of all divine and rational Impreſſions upon Mankind, becauſe ſome of them are deluded and miſtaken; and will admit no men to have attained a right knowledg in Divine things, ſuitable to the trueſt exerciſe of their rational Faculties, becauſe part of the World, either by weakneſs or corruption, are under the dominion of vanity and lies: Such men are moſt puniſhed when they are left to themſelves, nor is it leſs vain to endeavour their ſatisfaction, than to make a demonſtration about colours to one that we know *cannot*, or elſe is reſolved that he *will* not look upon them; or to convince him of the harmony of any ſound, that reſolves before-

before-hand to make no uſe of his ears; or, at leaſt to call every thing diſcord, that does not ſuit with ſome *ill ſound* his ears are already poſſeſſed with.

Supernatural Religion is a thing propoſed to men with reaſon abundantly ſufficient to ſatisfie a man, reaſonably willing to be ſatisfied, and to leave him without excuſe if he be not ſatisfied. And beſides all other proofs of it, the ſame humane evidence, by which we reſt ſatisfied in all other things that we do nor ſee, deſcends to all Ages; but not with anſwers to every froward diſſenters objections, that will diſpute without end againſt the truth of it, becauſe he diſlikes the matter of it; and be ſo abſurdly diſingenuous to deny that to be a good proof to him of the Truth of the *Scriptures*, by which he himſelf reſts ſatisfied in the truth of a thouſand other things. He that will give no credit to any divine Revelation, unleſs God will ſatisfie his *curioſity* in the manner of its Conveyance to the world, ſays in effect; Though God have given me other good reaſon, and ſuch as he thought ſufficient for me to believe him, and upon which he has made it my duty to believe him; and *ſuch reaſon*, as I my ſelf think ſufficient for the Belief of all other things of the like nature; and

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such as I think abundant proof to make good any thing I have a mind to; yet *I will not* believe him, unless I please. And though my Reason tell me, that some Being, superiour to all beings, made the world; Yet, unless I had seen him do it, I will not believe it.

Such men are monstrous *Fanaticks*, men that live upon fancy; that fancy to themselves, how God should govern the World, and how he should reveal himself to it; and because he does not do it according to their *fancy*, and descend to gratifie their fond imaginations, they make it a Law to themselves, that they will neither receive nor admit any of his Laws, nor pay any acknowledgment to his Being. What delight have men taken of late to upbraid the Scriptures with all kind of uncertainty in the *delivery* of them, and all kind of contradictions and absurdities in the *matter* of them? Mens wits and parts have encreased their value with very many, as they could best enlarge upon these heads; and despise others, as *weak* and to be pitied, who make any stand for divine Truth. By this, men tempt themselves and others into a mean value of Religion, and at last, into the highest irreligion. 'Tis, I confess, a noble enquiry

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to ſearch into the *grounds of Religion*, that ſo we may be rationally aſcertained of its Truth, and not take our greateſt concern upon truſt. But to deal in thoſe things with no other intention, but to tie knots, to invent vexing queſtions, and peeviſh objections; and, becauſe the Scriptures croſs mens boundleſs appetites, to load them with all imaginable diſgrace and contempt, that ſo God may be more eaſily diſmiſſed out of the world: If we deal with the Scriptures, I ſay, upon no better or other account, 'tis no wonder if the ſucceſs be accordingly; and that men, ſteering ſuch a courſe not only turn their backs upon all *ſupernatural Religion*; but at laſt arrive at the utmoſt confines of all prophaneneſs and contempt of Religion it ſelf in down-right *Atheiſm.*

Fifthly, 'Tis no unuſual thing to ſee many, that if they may not enjoy the *worſhip* they are affected to, and think the beſt, will go to none at all. And from ſuch a habit once gotten, 'tis eaſie to foreſee what a precipice of *Atheiſm* men are at the brink of. All men are not ſo well *catechized* in Religion, nor ſo well affected to it as to try all experiments before they forſake it. There is, in the generality of men, ſomething in the *parties* and perſons they adhere

to, and in the *mode* of Worſhip they joyn in, which pleaſeth them, and has ſome part in their affections, aswell as Religion it ſelf purely and abſtractly conſidered. And although ſuch *collateral things* are in themſelves not the beſt and higheſt motives to divine Worſhip; yet they are ſuch, as conſiderably prevail with not the leaſt part of Mankind: And they are ſuch, as God in his providence over-rules, to preſerve men in their open owning a Deity, and a viſible ſubjection to him in ſome outward Worſhip, and to prevent a total apoſtacy to Atheiſm.

We may not unreaſonably ſuppoſe, that the reſtraint, which in ſome times paſt, was upon the uſe of the *Liturgy*, and the preſent Worſhip of the Church of *England*, to which the generality of the Nation were earneſtly inclined, did much occaſion that *Atheiſm*, which hath, too viſibly, infected many amongſt us. For, not being able to enjoy the way of Worſhip they moſt liked, and wholly diſguſting the way that was then uſed in publick, 'tis to be feared that in a ſhort time, many came, by that means, to throw off all thoughts of God; and, by a diſuſe of paying any homage or ſervice to him, came, at laſt, totally to deny him, and poſitively to diſpute againſt him.

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The great concern of a Chriſtian State is to juſtify the *common Cauſe of God* in the World, and to dam out the flood of general *Atheiſm*. Such; who can have no tye from *above*, and diſown all ſuperior obligations, are never to be ruled but by force. Religion ſhould be encouraged as that univerſal homage Mankind ſtands obliged to pay to a Soveraign Being. Keeping men firm in their *Religious Allegiance* has a neceſſary influence upon all human Societies. He that is the faſteſt to God, will be the moſt dutiful Subject, the moſt uſeful Citizen; and the ſafeſt Friend. Whatever tends to eradicate Religion, will be found alſo moſt pernicious and deſtructive to the State.

Sixthly, *The general revival of, and the great applauſe that hath of late, been given to ſuch philoſophical notions, as broadly and directly lead this way.* Here the *Atheiſt is* moſt buſily at work, and drives on his greateſt trade. Though other things help men, firſt, to like *Atheiſm*, and look after it; yet here is the great armoury for their defence; here they learn to juſtifie what before they reſolved to like. *Democritus* is better believed than *Moſes*, and *Epicurus* in better credit with them than St. *Paul*. Whatever can be fetched

from *Ariſtotle* and others to make good the worlds Eternity, is greedily embraced: and all the notions of *Epicurus*, to make good the *Hypotheſis of Atoms*, are not only revived and juſtified, but improved, to the total denial of a God, in the height of all Atheiſtical principles, and maintained with ſo much ſeeming triumph over the reſt of the world, that he is thought a novice in knowledge, and an abſolute freſhman in the higheſt ſort of learning, that has not imbibed ſome of this kind of Philoſophy. The reaſons, or rather, abſurdities, upon which theſe things are grounded, I ſhall have occaſion enough to conſider hereafter. This account ought every-where to be given of them; that as theſe two are the only projects, that have been yet found out by all the *Atheiſtical wits* that have been in the World, to oppoſe the Being of God; ſo they are ſuch things as were by ſome very few men only firſt ſtarted, and found very little acceptance in thoſe times, wherein they firſt became publick: Nay, were contradicted and confuted, by the generality of the ſobereſt and wiſeſt men then extant. 'Tis truly obſerved by a learned Author, That the firſt Atheiſm we hear of in the world was in the moſt blind and ſuper-

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ſtitious age of *Greece*; when the *obſcene Poets* had ſo debauched the minds of the people, to believe ſuch monſtrous things of their gods, that all, who were any way virtuous, muſt needs abhor ſuch Deities, and they became a deriſion to all intelligent men. Then it was, (and not till then) that men began to ſet their wits on work, to *ſolve the Phænomena* of nature without any Deity at all, and derive the world (in its original) from a *fortuitous concourſe* of an infinite company of little particles, which we call *Atoms*. Yet the very ſchool of *Epicurus* himſelf never quite baniſhed the notion of a Deity: which made *Cicero* ſay of him, that he did *nomine ponere* but *re tollere deos*: His Diſciples in theſe days have too far enlarged thoſe attainments. It falls out now amongſt us (in an Age declining from God, wherein ſuch things are by many moſt ſet by, that lead us fartheſt from him, and ſeem moſt to ſecure us againſt him) that the ſcent of theſe things is freſhly and hotly purſued: and the *Rabble* of theſe Notions, which have been ſo often routed, and have fled before the World, are now faced about, and a-freſh recruited to aſſault this preſent Generation.

Theſe unhappy conjunctions, with many others, have conſpired to make this Age a ſufferer from the *worſt of enemies*, and to hazard us upon the moſt dangerous Rock. Men have (according to their ſeveral intereſts and inclinations) come ſeveral ways to diſguſt Religion: and out of many leſſer tracks, fallen at laſt into the broad road of *Atheiſm*.

By this, *My Lord*, I have endeavoured to ſhew you ſome fore-runners of this evil, and ſome of thoſe Harbingers that uſually prepare for it. I ſhall detain you no longer in theſe *Preliminaries*, but apply my ſelf to that, where the greateſt concern of this Undertaking lies.

That the nobleſt ſearch of humane thoughts is after the firſt and higheſt Being, will not be denied; and 'tis equally true, that mans reaſoning faculty, in its due exerciſe naturally ſteers him that way. He that finds himſelf in poſſeſſion of that great *Luminary* we call Underſtanding, and that ſupreme endowment of Reaſon, (by which he hath the aſcendant of all other viſible Beings, and maintains a ſupremacy over the reſt of the World) muſt needs

needs be led, by that, to lay cloſe ſiege to his *own Being*, and bethink himſelf round, how himſelf (as well as all other things) came firſt to be. 'Tis that lower principle of *ſenſe* that lies beneath, that reſts in the viſible exiſtence of things, and knows no more of them than that they are. Reaſons motion lies in a higher Orb, and will not be denied to know *why* things are, as well as that they are; and *how* they came to be, as well as that they be. Such a ſally a reaſonable Being muſt needs make beyond the world; and ſo create to himſelf a ſubject for his enquiry beyond what is viſibly ſeen, and made the common object of his converſe. To ſee a man ruling himſelf and the reſt of the world by the *freſh ſpringing up of thoughts*, and the actings of his Reaſon; and yet to ſuppoſe him to go no further in the extention of that faculty, than barely to improve things juſt as he finds them; and to take all things for granted therefore originally to *be*, only becauſe they now actually *are*: to ſearch ſo narrowly into every corner of Nature, and yet to take the higheſt relation to things (which is the Being of them) for granted, were to put the higheſt abſurdity upon the univerſal Reaſon, and to narrow that large comprehenſive Faculty

into a very mean exerciſe. The genuine tendency of a rational Soul is ſtill to the utmoſt bounds of all enquiry; to know what is capable of being known, and to be aſcertained what cannot be known. As the ſatisfaction of Reaſon is in its own exerciſe, and can have no ſatisfaction but what it gives it ſelf; and takes pleaſure in all other things only as they are matter for that faculty to work upon; So the chiefeſt attainmen *Reaſon* muſt needs preſs after, is, to know it ſelf in its own original, and to know the firſt Cauſe of that, which gives being to the knowledg of all other cauſes. Reaſon, in its actings, aims at a full comprehenſion, and a compleat knowledg of every thing it can conceive of: which is, to make every thing appear reaſonable to it; and ſo reduce it to a ſatisfaction to it ſelf. All reaſonings of a man, about himſelf and all other things, muſt needs come ſhort of the ſatisfaction reaſon aims at, in making things anſwer the teſt of its exerciſe; and, at laſt, lie even to its own *innate rectitude*, unleſs it arrive at ſome acquieſcency, how it ſelf and all other things *came to be*, as well as that they be. He that *thinks*, or reaſons, muſt needs know, by that act, that he is; he needs no other demonſtration of his own

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Being to himſelf, and with great eaſe, may he inform himſelf of the actual exiſtence of all other things. But theSo uls enquiry will ſtill reach further; the proper food of craving Reaſon is a reaſonable knowledg of things ſuch as the ſubject is capable of. Reaſon travels to reduce things: *Firſt*, To the truth of their exiſtence. *Secondly*, To the reaſon of their exiſtence. And *Thirdly*, To the right manner and method of their exiſtence, in their relation to, and dependence upon each other. The *whole truth* of no exiſtence can be known, ſo as Reaſon may juſtly challenge a knowledg of it, without knowing the *cauſe* of it, or elſe knowing there was *no cauſe* of it: becauſe the great and ſupreme diſtinction of *Beings* lies in the abſoluteneſs and dependency of them. To know any viſible exiſtence to be *without cauſe*, is to know it to be that, which no man can rationally know any viſible being to be: which is to know it to be eternal. And if it have ſome firſt Cauſe, without ſome reaſonable account of that to our ſelves, we can never tell from what, nor from whence to date it; nor how to anſwer many other queſtions Reaſon will ask about it. Things are never in their proper ſtation, till they are made a right object

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for knowledg, and reduced to a due correſpondence to Reaſon. Then they bear their proportion to the great and univerſal harmony. 'Tis Reaſon puts the World into regular motion; ſorts each thing; places Cauſes before Effects; finds out Cauſes by Effects, and neceſſary Concluſions from their own natural premiſes; and ſtill purſues things to the higheſt and *ſupremeſt Cauſe* of all. Search the World without this Candle, and it will appear nothing but a heap of confuſion. God ſeems to have placed this ſublime Faculty in Man, for two ends: *Firſt*, That a Man might rule himſelf, and the reſt of the World, in ſuch a manner and method, as might carry ſome proportion to the eternal Reaſon above, of which mans rational Soul is an image. And *Secondly*, that by the uſe of it he might aſcend to the knowledg of his Maker, and have every thing he ſaw, as well as himſelf, made a ſtep to help him upward. The ground of all our homage to God lies in the knowledge we have of a *Supreme Being* before us and above us: Without that 'tis impoſſible ever to introduce Religion into the World. Two things ſeem to be but a reaſonable collection from the natural compoſition of Mankind, and the pure

iſſues

iſſues of a reaſoning Soul, abſtractly taken from all helps of Revelation: *Firſt*, That 'tis not poſſible for that noble and impartial *faculty* of mans Reaſon to be true to it ſelf in its own actings, and to arrive at its own neceſſary ſatisfaction, about it ſelf and all other beings, without a ſtrict inquiry into the primary reaſon and firſt cauſe of the being of it ſelf and all other things. And *Secondly*, That the ſingle exerciſe of natural Reaſon, in ſuch an inquiry, will ſafely conduct a man to the concluſion of ſome *firſt Cauſe*, and ſome one *ſupreme Being* the cauſe of all Beings, which we call God. To prove theſe Poſitions undoubted Truths, ſhall be the firſt endeavour of the following diſcourſe. If we can happily bring Mankind to God by this high-way of their Reaſon, and light a man to his Creator by this *Lamp* that continually burns in his own ſoul, we ſhall then prove *Atheiſm* a very *lye*, and the *Atheiſt* a moſt unnatural *lyar* towards his God, and towards himſelf. I ſhall proceed, Firſt, *affirmatively* and poſitively; and then negatively, in giving a full anſwer to all the *Atheiſt* has to object.

Conſider, in the firſt place, 'tis not a thing within any compaſs of ſuppoſition, that Mankind in the uſe of their Reaſon, ſhould

should fail to fix upon that as their first and great enquiry, *How things came to be, in the posture they are now found? and what original they owe themselves to?* that faculty that reasons about *causes* and *effects*, must needs ascend, by that method, to the highest Cause of all things. No satisfying knowledge, which the Soul still labours after, can be had of any thing, unless we can trace it to its *original*; without that, it proves but a vexation to reason, and reproaches it with ignorance, in that grand fundamental in the knowledge of things, which must give the truest inlet to all the subsequent comprehension we can have of them. That Reason, in its operation, must needs move this way, will appear by these several considerations.

First, *There is no more obvious enquiry for whatever we see, than to know, whether it have a beginning, or were without a beginning.* If it had beginning, when it did begin, and how it came first to exist in the World; and from whence it had the donation of it self. No mans Reason can acquiesce, without some answer to this.

Secondly, *Finding out the original of things, determines the property of them*; and so fills the mind with a satisfaction in that great concern Reason has about every thing,

thing, to know whoſe it is. Whatever was the firſt Cauſe of a thing, and the original Maker of it, muſt needs have the property of it. 'Tis impoſſible there ſhould be a claim made, with ſo much juſtice, to any thing, as by the firſt Maker of it. 'Tis not poſſible to diſſeize him of his Right to a thing, that gave it its exiſtence, and cauſed it firſt to be. He that firſt produced a Being, had that Being firſt entirely exiſting in himſelf, and in his own power. Whatever is made, can have no property in it ſelf: The Right muſt needs be in the Maker. Here Reaſon ſits down ſatisfied, and fully acquieſces in that particular.

Thirdly, *The knowing the original of any thing, gives us the true boundaries and limits of it.* Nothing can riſe higher than its original. No effect can out-reach the cauſe. Nay there muſt be ever a neceſſary *inferiority* in whatever is *cauſed*, to the firſt *Cauſer* of it. This is a neceſſary direction to all the ſearches of reaſon about the nature of any thing, to know the firſt Cauſe of ſuch a Being, and the true *Original* it derives it ſelf from.

Fourthly, *The kuowledge of things in their* prima cauſa *quiets our reaſon, becauſe it gives us the utmoſt and ultimate knowledge*

that

that is to be had about them. To know a thing in it ſelf, and to know it in its firſt *cauſe* and *original*, is to know *all* that Reaſon can expect to know about any viſible Being. This brings things to hold their due proportion to the rational Soul; and rectifies us in our knowledg, in placing *Cauſes* and *Effects* in their due Stations.

Secondly, If the being of Reaſon be ſuch, as that it muſt neceſſarily make out it ſelf into ſuch enquiries; and that the firſt Cauſe of things is the moſt proper object for a rational Soul that trades in Cauſes and Effects, we will thus proceed.

Every thing in this World muſt either be cauſed by it ſelf, or be without cauſe, or elſe be cauſed by ſomething that was before, and is above it ſelf. The two firſt are not only improbable, but utterly impoſſible: and therefore the Truth muſt needs lie in the laſt.

For the firſt; The *rudeſt Nonſenſe* that can impoſe it ſelf upon any mans Reaſon, is to ſay, *That any thing ever cauſed or made it ſelf.* 'Tis to make every thing its own God, and to cut up by the roots all ſubordination and dependency of one thing upon

upon another. For, were all things equally cauſed by themſelves, they muſt needs be equal in their ſuperiority, becauſe equal in their independency. 'Tis likewiſe to make a thing impoſſible to have an end; for what once made it ſelf, can, by the ſame influence, eternally make it ſelf. If any thing were once the reaſon of it ſelf, it may be ever ſo: nor would any thing ever ceaſe to be, that had a power to preſerve its own Being. But beſides all this, there is this further abſurdity never to be avoided; to ſay a thing made it ſelf, is to ſay, it did *act* before it *was*, and did operate before it had an exiſtence; and that it did the higheſt thing to it ſelf (which was to cauſe and make it ſelf) before it was it ſelf. The loweſt ſort of Reaſon wears an *antipathy* to ſuch an abſurdity.

Secondly, *The World could not be without Cauſe*: For then it muſt be what 'tis impoſſible it ſhould be, which is eternal. For Cauſes and Effects (of which the World conſiſts) own themſelves to a firſt Cauſe, and neceſſarily ſuppoſe *time* and *priority* in time. The Cauſe naturally precedes the Effect. They muſt have time to operate in. Cauſes and Effects (that are in ſuch exiſtence, neceſſarily conjoyned) muſt needs

needs ceaſe to that denomination in Eternity, and ſo ceaſe to be what they really are; and therefore are impoſſible to be eternal: if one be eternal, the other muſt needs be ſo too. And 'tis evident, an eternal Cauſe, and an eternal Effect is an abſurdity. Now that the World could not be eternal (and ſo conſequently without cauſe) may thus appear. If the world be *eternal*, 'tis plain and undeniable, it muſt ever have been in the poſture that now it is: and that is utterly impoſſible; for the poſture the world is now in, is a courſe of generation and corruption; and ſo corruption muſt as well have been eternal as generation. And thence 'twill evidently follow, that things that do generate and corrupt muſt have eternally been, and *eternally not* have been. If the World have been from everlaſting, then the preſent ſtate of the world in the propagation of it ſelf muſt needs have been ſo too. The preſent way of *generation*, and a ſucceſſion in that generation, muſt needs have been everlaſting too. For if the World be eternal, though individual perſons and Beings ceaſe, and new come in their places; yet the general round and courſe of the World, in maintaining it ſelf, muſt needs have been the ſame for ever. But to conceive that, is directly

directly to oppoſe our own Reaſon and Experience: becauſe we find daily, that the way by which the World is now propagated and upheld, could not have eternally been, but plainly points us to ſome original cauſe we ſee not. For if the Hen be produced by the Egg, and that Egg produced by a Hen, and the propagation of both run in ſuch a circle; common Reaſon tells us, there muſt be ſome firſt Hen, or ſome firſt Egg to ſet that way of Generation on work, or elſe it could never have been. As 'tis in *motion*; there muſt be ſome firſt mover, or elſe an innate and ſelf-originated principle of motion; if there be an innate ſelf-originated principle of motion, then whatſoever ſo moves, can never ceaſe to move; if not, there can never be motion without a firſt mover. We ſee nothing but what is produced by ſomewhat elſe: and therefore muſt rationally conclude, there muſt be ſome firſt producer. The whole World can ſhew us the beginning, originally of nothing, ſo as to ſatisfie our Reaſon about it: and yet, in its whole conſtitution, palpably fathers itſelf upon ſome firſt beginning. Our Reaſon therefore compels us to look out to ſome *ſupreme Beginning*, that gave the firſt riſe to all things we ſee, and ſet them firſt on work. A man

begets a man, and that man was begotten by another man; but where is the first man, to beget, that was not begotten, nor brought forth in the common way of generation? For such, our Reason tells us, by this visible course of propagating the World there must needs have been. 'Tis utterly impossible (in the way we see men begotten) there should ever have been any men in the World without some first man. Our Reason is lost in the circle of one mans begetting another, without some *first man* that was not begotten. 'Tis non-sense to say, that one man begat another from eternity; because that one mans begetting another, directly relates to Time, Beginning, and Priority, which are all perfectly destructive to the notion of *Eternity*, and cannot be originated there. Sometimes *Aristotle* himself confesseth, there must be a first cause, and that infinity of causes is a monstrous absurdity. Either the *Atheist* must confess, that this course of generation does point us to some first rise and beginning of it, and cannot be supposed, by our Reason, to be without it; and then there must be some *first man*, that must begin the natural way of propagating Mankind; and that *first man* could not be begotten by any other; for then he could not be the first;

firſt; for that rule is true, *Primo non eſt prius*: and if ſo, that firſt man muſt either cauſe himſelf, or be cauſed by ſomething above and before himſelf. To ſay the firſt I have ſhewed is an abſolute contradiction; to ſay the latter, is to bring us regularly to God. If the *Atheiſt* denies that there *was any beginning of things, or any firſt in generation*; but ſaies, that *the World is eternal, and the way of its generation is eternal likewiſe*; I ſhall plainly refute him, as rendring himſelf groſly abſurd, and that ſeveral ways. Firſt, he begs a thing for granted to be, and muſt take it ſo to be, which he never ſaw, nor can have any aſſurance of. The eternity of the VVorld, and the ſucceſſion eternal of generation and corruption, is not only unreaſonable for any man to believe, but impoſſible for any man to know. 'Tis unreaſonable to believe, becauſe our ſelves, and all we converſe with, have a *viſible beginning* and ending, and manner of production; which directly fathers it ſelf upon ſome firſt beginning; and could not have its riſe from eternity. For whatever begins and ends, to ſay it was eternal in that courſe, is to ſay plainly, there was eternal beginning, and eternal ending; which is to affirm a moſt ridiculous contradiction. And 'tis as impoſſible for

any man to know, unless he knew himself eternal: and then he must know himself to be (which is impossible) contrary to what he really is: or else there must have been some *eternal Tradition*, from one to another, of the VVorlds eternity, which neither *is* nor ever *yet was*. But the clearest and most undeniable Proof, that the World, in its present being, could not be eternal, (which it must necessarily have been, if it be eternal) will thus arise. The visible way by which the World is carried on, is by a course of generation and corruption: but such a course is impossible to be eternal; and that for these Reasons.

First, *Generation and Corruption suppose an uneven succession, a rising and falling*; which is impossible in that which is eternal; for that which is properly eternal, is incapable of bounds, and includes infiniteness in its intrinsick and formal reason. And where things are infinite, there can be no cadencies in the manner of their existence. And this regulates their operation. For all things act and work according to their being and manner of existence. But now, if things do infinitely generate, and infinitely corrupt, as on the supposition of the Worlds eternal self-existence they must be

be ſaid to do, they muſt infinitely be, and infinitely not be, which is plainly deſtructive to an Eternal Being; yea, to any Being at all. Again, whatſoever is infinite, muſt needs be perfect; and *evenly* ſo, becauſe it is *infinitely* ſo. If there were an infinite ſucceſſion in Generation, no generable matter could ever be deficient, or ever miſs in its proper Generation: which experience daily ſhews us it does. If all the generable matter, and the generable quality be infinite, (which it muſt be, if there be infinity in Generation) then they muſt perpetually continue the ſame *operation* without a poſſibility of falling in their proper kind. The truth of this will thus appear; either Generation, in its quality, was infinitely perfect, or *not*; if you ſay *not*, you make *Imperfect Infinite*, which cannot be; if it were, then it muſt needs *continue* ſo; there can never be any miſcarriage in Generation, where Generation is *Infinite*. That which did infinitely operate *any* way, muſt needs perfectly operate *that* way; and ſo infallibly continue to operate the ſame way.

Secondly, *Whatever is ſuppoſed Infinite, muſt be ſuppoſed entirely compleat and perfect.* Nothing that is imperfect can be Infinite; for you muſt then ſuppoſe, that either *all* that is Infinite is imperfect, or *part*

of it. If all, then there could never have been any thing perfect in any kind; for whatsoever *is* (if you suppose infinite) must needs be whatever *was*, or else be derived from whatever was. If part only be *imperfect*, then Infiniteness must be divided into Perfection and Imperfection, which is impossible. For wheresoever there is Infiniteness, there must needs be *Identity*. Whatsoever had an Infinite *Being*, must needs have a perfect Being; because whatsoever did Infinitely exist, has the highest perfection of Being: for infinitely to be, is the highest perfection of *Being*, and where that highest intrinsick perfection of *being* is, it necessarily swallows up all other perfection into it self, and there can never be wanting any lower perfection belonging to Being. Infinity in Being comprehends necessarily all Perfection in Being. Upon this ground, *Generation* and *Corruption* can never be Infinite; Corruption cannot be annexed to any thing Infinite; Infinite is the top of perfection, and Corruption the bottom of all imperfection. The corruption of any thing is the total ending of that thing, as such a *Compositum*; according to that true Maxim in Philosophy, *Id quod semel corruptum est, non posse idem numero naturæ viribus restitui.* If a Stick be burnt into ashes

aſhes, I am ſure the form and compoſition of the Stick is diſſolved; and when a *Candle* expires into ſmoke, and that ſmoke into Air, the form of the Candle, and the being of it as a Candle, is gone. I leave ſuch to find out all the ſame individual parts of the *Stick* in the *Aſhes*, and all the wax and the thred of the Candle in the Smoke of it, who tell you they are there, but lie in *ſmall maſſes, and firſt Concretions, that are not diſcernable by the moſt acute ſenſe.*

The Atheiſt will, here, no way advantage himſelf, by the objection he uſually makes: which is this; ſaies he, *When any thing corrupts, the matter of which that thing was made, ſtill remians, 'tis the form and compoſition of that thing, that is only corrupted, and ſo annihilated; the World loſeth nothing of the matter it had in it before, by ſuch corruption*——Let the Atheiſt have all this granted, yet it no way conduceth to his purpoſe. For I will ask him but this queſtion, *How was the matter of the World infinitely exiſting?* If it were infinitely exiſting in this way of generating and corrupting particular forms, then he falls flat with the ſtroke of this argument; for then the World muſt needs be *infinitely beginning*, and *infinitely ending*, which is the height of contradiction; and (in all viſible forms

and beings, of which the World conſiſts) infinitely ſomething, and infinitely nothing. For it was infinitely generating them, and infinitely corrupting them; for corrupting is a part of the World, as well as generating: and where the whole is Infinite, all the parts muſt needs be Infinite too: according to that general Maxim agreed by all *Philoſophers, that all the parts of an Infinite are Infinite.* If this generating matter of the World did infinitely exiſt before it did operate in Generation and Corruption, then Generation and Corruption had a time when they were not: and ſo are not Infinite. Nor is the World, then, *Eternal*; for it has not then ever been, in the poſture it now is. This lies plain againſt the *Atheiſt*; let him take the matter of the World to be in what kind of Compoſition he will: either with *Ariſtotle*, and thoſe of his way, who ſay, the Elements, when they make up a compoſition, loſe themſelves, and are diſſolved, both in ſubſtance and quality, into ſomewhat they conſtitute, which is not themſelves. Or elſe with thoſe of the *Atomical* way, who ſay, that the *particles* of things are in all mixtures of humane nature, only *appoſed* each to other, without any loſs of their own proper natures; either way, the thing formed, in the form and compoſition

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of it, is, by Corruption, totally *nulled* and deſtroyed.

Thirdly, a ſucceſſion of the World by Generation and Corruption, could never be Infinite, *becauſe it neceſſarily ſuppoſeth Priority and Poſteriority.* Nay, 'tis viſible to our ſenſes and our reaſon, that it has *priority* and *poſteriority* in it: which belong purely and peculiarly to *time*, and cannot be applied to what is Infinite. To ſay that two things that depend each upon other, and cauſe each other, are both eternal in that cauſality, is abſurd; becauſe, in ſuch a *Cauſality*, they could not be both at one time, which all eternal things neceſſarily are. We ſee by our common experience, that a thing cannot corrupt in one form, and generate into another, at one and the ſame time. If it ſhould do ſo, and that courſe were eternal, it will unavoidably follow, that the World (as to all generated Beings) was Infinitely ſomething, and Infinitely nothing.

Fourthly, *Things that everlaſtingly were, could never come under any confinement or regulation of time.* *Plato* in his *Timæus*, diſcourſes largely of this: [Things that were eternally ſo, could never come under the mutations and change of time; which we ſee all things now do. 'Tis time brings into

into Corruption, and Time brings into Generation. Whatever was eternal *a parte ante*, muſt needs be ſo *a parte poſt*, and run an even and uninterrupted courſe. An eternal thing can never be ſtopt by time.] If to evade this, the *Atheiſt* will ſay, that every thing ſtill is as it ever and eternally was, (which he muſt ſay) then plainly he affirms, that time and all the accidents, viciſſitudes, and effects of it, are eternal too; for if all things, now ſubject to the regulament of Time, were everlaſtingly ſo, then Time muſt needs be everlaſting too; which is to come to the dregs of all contradiction.

Fifthly, *Whatever is eternal can never alter it ſelf, nor its own form, nor be ſubject to alteration.* Becauſe whatever did eternally exiſt, did neceſſarily exiſt as it eternally was; all eternal things muſt needs be *unchangeable*. If matter abſtracted from Generation were eternal, it could then never alter it ſelf, and come into the round of Generation and Corruption: For then 'twere not eternal. If matter be ſaid to be eternal in Generation and Corruption, the anſwer has been given, 'tis impoſſible they ſhould be both eternal; for then they muſt be both exiſting together: which is a contradiction; as much as to ſay, a thing *is*, and is *not*, at the

the ſame time. Generation of one Being by corruption of another, ſuppoſeth another Being precedent to it. Corruption of *one Being*, produceth the Generation of another. But 'tis utterly impoſſible, that any Being (that ever was eternally a Being) ſhould ever turn into Corruption, and ſo ceaſe to be ſuch a Being in time, as it eternally had been. And if matter, abſtracted from Beings and forms in ſuch a way, were eternally matter, it muſt needs eternally ſo continue.

Sixthly, *If the World be Eternal, it cannot poſſibly have in it ſelf any inherent intrinſique defect about its being ſo*; That is, a thing cannot be imagined to have ſo, that is eternal; eſpecially a direct relation to an Original which is deſtructive to the notion of Eternity. Whatſoever is *eternal*, muſt needs carry an evidence paſt queſtion, of its entire exiſting by it ſelf; becauſe what is eternal muſt needs have perfection in its Exiſtence, and be totally *independent* from all other things in reference to its own Being. But the World it ſelf confutes all imaginable *Atheiſm* about this point, becauſe, while we look no further than the World for it ſelf, we are at a perfect loſs for a firſt Cauſe, and a firſt Mover in every thing. The World (in this viſible defect)

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is its own *negative* to its own Eternity; for whatſoever I can, with any good reaſon, imagine eternal, I muſt ſee to be without *cauſe*, without *dependence*, without *beginning*, and a thing that entirely exiſts by it ſelf; but 'tis evident, there is no one part nor piece of the World that is ſo. And if you ſay, the whole frame of the World (in this way you ſee it) was eternal, you muſt make all things relating to Time, Beginning and Ending, to Corrupting and Generating, to be eternal too. For if the *whole* of the World be (in the courſe it now keeps) eternal, then all the *parts* and *methods* of that general courſe muſt neceſſarily be ſo too, and then we arrive at the higheſt abſurdity, and the utmoſt of all contradictions. If we conſider the ſeveral ſtages the World takes in Ages and Generations; if the World have been eternal, ſuch Ages and Generations muſt have been eternal too. And then this will plainly follow, (which is not poſſible to be) that there is inequality in Infiniteneſs, and that one Infinite may be of *one ſize*, and another Infinite of another; for ſo we palpably ſee Ages and Generations to be. Nor can the *Atheiſt* ever avoid this, unleſs he will ſay, that the end of a Generation is as ſoon as the beginning of it; for elſe they cannot be both eternal. Take

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any one Generation, if you admit it to begin and end, it cannot be Infinite, unleſs I believe that to be Infinite, which I ſee paſt, and which I ſee begin. A Generation a thouſand years hence cannot be upon the ſame terms of Infiniteneſs with the preſent Generation. And yet it cannot be denied, that all Infiniteneſſes are the ſame Infinity, or elſe they could not be Infinite. The truth is, that where there are periods, changes, alterations, beginnings, and endings, 'tis ridiculous to talk of Infinity; and yet the World is filled with nothing elſe. And had the World it ſelf been Infinite and Eternal, with the knowledge that is in it, and in the poſture we ſee it; however individuals had failed, there muſt needs have been an *Eternal Knowledg* in the World of its own *Eternal exiſtence*, which would eaſily have ended, (nay, have prevented) all Diſcourſes of this nature.

The Atheiſt uſually objects in this matter, and pleads for the Worlds Eternity, by urging that *maxim* of *Ariſtotle*, ſo much renowned by him, that he ſayes, all *Philoſophers* did agree to it; which is, that *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out *of nothing*, *nothing can be produced*. And therefore they infer from thence, either an eternity in the World, or in ſome pre exiſting Matter. I will

will not ſay of this principle, as was ſaid of one of *Euclids* firſt *Demonſtrations*, *that it was ſo plain, an Aſs could not miſs it.* But I may very well ſay, *He muſt be a Great one that denies it.* But yet it gives the Atheiſt no help at all. For when *Ocellus* and *Ariſtotle* argued from this, they looked no further than the World, than bare matter, and the natural courſe of production the VVorld is now in; and if we reſpect only matter, this maxim is undeniably true, [That no matter can be produced, but by ſome other matter.] If the Atheiſt will beg the queſtion, and ſay, there is nothing above or beſide this World, I confeſs the maxim is undeniably true, as it relates to matter. We are not ſpeaking how the World exiſts within it ſelf only, but how the VVorld it ſelf came to exiſt: and when we prove a ſupreme Being above the World this maxim is out of doors as to the Atheiſts purpoſe; and is no way deſtroyed or denied, by ſaying, [*God firſt made the matter of the World out of no other matter, and ſo out of nothing*;] if you reſpect only matter for he made it by himſelf, in whom all things are exiſting, and have their firſt Being *tanquam in origine*, and *in prima cauſa*. 'Tis abſurd to ſay, an Infinite Being, that has all things exiſting virtually in himſelf

himſelf, made any thing out of nothing: and yet (if you reſpect only actual matter) he made all actual matter out of no matter, but potentially by himſelf, who does not conſiſt of matter. And when we ſay, all things were made of *nothing*; Nothing, by a ſuppoſition, ſupplies the place of the *term* from *whence*, and not of the *matter* whereof they were made. If we look then no further than this World, and only to that, nothing can be produced but by matter and motion, becauſe there is nothing in it but matter and motion: and therefore, to ſay, any thing were cauſed any other way, were to ſay [ſomething were cauſed by nothing] which were impoſſible. But if we prove a ſupreme Being above the World, 'tis no deſtruction to this maxim, to ſay, that matter and motion it ſelf were cauſed out of no other matter and motion; yet not from nothing, but from the *active potentiality* of ſuch a ſupreme aud Infinite being, that can, from himſelf, cauſe and produce whatſoever is poſſible to be cauſed and produced; who (being without all cauſe, and above all cauſe) may well be ſuppoſed to be the author of all Cauſes. So that this maxim determines the main queſtion no way; but may be an appurtenant to it, and very well *ſolved* either way.

Having

Having thus endeavoured to make those two first things proposed, evident; First, *That things could not make or cause themselves*: And that the *World could never be its own Original*. And Secondly, *That nothing in the World, nor the whole of the World it self, could be without cause, and so be eternal*. I shall proceed to prove the third thing proposed, which was, *that the World was caused by something before it, and above it*: and that there is one supreme eternal Being which we call GOD, that did cause and make the World. And this I make good several wayes.

First, *The universal agreement and consent that has been amongst Mankind, in all Places, Times, and Ages, in this matter*, all concurring in the existence of a Deity, strongly affirms this. Where was there (by record of experience) any people, in any Nation under the Sun, found, that did not pay some homage to the notion of a *Deity*? Where did ever avowed *Atheism* possess any part of the World, or fix its habitation? The whole World have ever subscribed their subjection to a superiour Being. All the Idolatry and Polytheism, that has been in the World, has been founded in this; for, though their Worship hath not been rightly directed,

directed, and their homage not regularly paid where it became due, yet this General Principle ſtill lay uppermoſt in the ſpirits of mankind; [*That a Worſhip was to be performed, and a Homage to be paid, to ſomewhat that was before them, and is above them.* You may as ſoon find a Nation without their Souls, as without their Gods. Nay, they would ſet up a *Leek*, an *Onion*, a *Calf*, or an *Oxe*, or any creature to ſubject themſelves to a ſupreme Deity by; and make it a *medium* to vent that preſſing ſenſe of a ſubjection to *ſomewhat above them*, rather than not do it. Men would have an Altar to an *unknown God*, rather than none: which, when they had nothing viſible, declares a pure innate principle to ſomwhat above them. They were ſo filled with ſuch an apprehenſion, that they would have a Deity for *every thing*: for their Corn and their Wine, and every thing they dealt with. The *Romans*, by that method, had multiplied their Gods to above *thirty thouſand*: and other Nations not much behind them. Which can ſpeak no other thing unto us, than that men ſaw ſomewhat of a Deity in themſelves and every thing elſe, under whoſe rule and diſpoſe all things lay ſubjected, and in whom they lived and moved, and had their being. Nor would they undertake any thing, in *Peace* or

War, private or publick, without a previous application to a Deity: whoſe right to diſpoſe of them, and all their actions, they did thereby fully own and aſſent to. If we enquire into the true and primary grounds of this, we ſhall find them to lie in three things. *Firſt*, The univerſal exerciſe of the *Reaſon* of mankind, about themſelves and all they ſaw in the World, neceſſarily fixed in them this Concluſion, *That there muſt be a firſt Cauſe, and a ſupreme beginner of things*: The general Reaſon of the World has concenter'd in this, and proceeded upon it as an univerſal *Maxim*, agreeing to the truth of our natural faculties.

Secondly, *All mankind live and exiſt with an inſtinct of a Deity in their very nature and being*. A God runs in the veins and blood of men. So ſaith *Cicero*; *In omnium animis Deorum notionem impreſſit ipſa Natura. De N. Deor. l.* 1. We have diſcovered parts of the World, where men have lived without clothes, and without moſt humane circumſtances that attend mankind; but never any without ſome God. God has ſtamped a character of himſelf upon us in our very make. He has *made us in his own image*: We can never run away from *that* no more than we can take leave of our ſelves, and ſhake hands with our own Beings. Whatever God, the wiſe

wiſe Maker has made, they carry the marks of him about them. But to Man eſpecially he has ſecured his claim, in his very *Compoſition* and *Conſtitution*. Nor is this a ſuppoſition begged and taken for granted (like an *Atheiſts Hypotheſis*) but a thing evidently ſo. The fears and hopes of all men are naturally guided to ſomewhat above them. When Men are in *danger*, they naturally run to their God. Man in all his fears and ſorrows naturally ſhelters himſelf under a ſupreme Being above him. He ſoon finds himſelf at the utmoſt confines of his own protection: but ſits not down there; ſtill looks further and higher. The workings of his ſoul (as well as the form of his body) are ſtill upward; they have a divine tendency. Extremities are this Truth's opportunities. Though the *Atheiſt diſputes*, yet he cannot, ſomtimes, forbear to *tremble*. The notion of a Deity has made Mankind, in all ages, fall before it. VVould the Atheiſt be but ſo true to himſelf as to confeſs it, his own fears ſometimes confute his unbelief, and his own unavoidable practice forbid his principles. VVhen the meſſengers of Death come to treat with him, they will bring him *tidings of another World*; and awaken him with apprehenſions of that Deity he has ſo mock'd at. If there were nothing beyond this

World, and on the other ſide the grave, mens thoughts of futurity were very vain: and the trouble of moſt men were eaſily cured; they might not only poſſibly, but eaſily, make themſelves what they ſeem to be, and what they have really a mind to be.

Thirdly, Another ground of this may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to be, *an univerſal tradition amongſt men, not only of God's making the World, but of God's ſomtimes appearing to, and converſing with the VVorld.* Which he hath often done, and given a witneſs to himſelf that way. We may not only reaſonably imagine it a thing to have been, but we cannot with any good reaſon imagine it not to have been, that ſuch things ſhould not be told from one to another, and run in a channel of univerſal tradition. VVe cannot believe, but that *Adam* and *Eve* told the ſtory of the VVorlds original to their poſterity. And three men might carry it far: *Methuſelah* lived with *Adam* 243 years; *Shem* lived with *Methuſelah* 98 years before the flood; and *Iſaac* lived 50 years with *Shem* after the flood; and died but 10 years before the people went into *Egypt*. God has often made himſelf known to the World. And not only the thing it ſelf, but the manner of it muſt needs be a thing of that remark, that the ſtory of it could never die

in a whiſper. *Sacrificing* was a thing God revealed, in a ſupernatural way, to *Adam*; and we ſee the whole World filled with the practice of it, by the tradition of it from him: for it was ſpread all the World over in ſuch places, where it could not be received from the Practice and inſtitution of it amongſt the *Jews* afterwards. Sacrifices in themſelves muſt needs be ſupernatural, becauſe they are purely relating to Chriſt: and ſo muſt needs be revealed from God; and could not be ſuch a thing, as *Adam* at firſt ſhould invent and find out by natural light; and all the World ſhould, by the ſame, afterwards agree in, as a way of Worſhip, and a thing acceptable to God. Though in after-ages (as uſually it fares with Tradition) the manner and circumſtances of things by their often relation, might be varied and worn out: yet that main thing [that there was a God, and that he had ſomtimes in an eſpecial manner, made it known to ſome part of the World, that there was ſo] was likely to be permanent *in all Generations*. And yet Tradition was another thing in thoſe times when (as Learned Men obſerve) three men, *Methuſelah*, *Shem* and *Iſaac*, could carry on a Tradition from the Creation of the World, till within ten years of the People of *Iſraels* going into *Egypt*, which

was very many hundreds of years.

Two *Objections* the Atheiſt is uſually fraught with againſt theſe things.

Firſt, (ſaies he) *'Tis not true in fact, that there hath been this general conſent to the truth of a Deity:* My ſelf, and many others deny it; and that ſpoils the *univerſality* of it.

Secondly, This fear of a Deity (which, you ſay, the World is ſo poſſeſſed withall) is nothing but what ſome cunning men have foiſted into the World, upon politick grounds, and the better to ſerve their own turns, and keep the World in ſubjection and awe.

For the *firſt*, How little does it weigh down the oppoſite ſcale to this weighty Truth? If there be ſome *Ideots*, and ſome mad-men in the World, ſhall not Mankind be denominated *Rational?* If there be ſome *Torys* and *Moſs-Troopers*, and ſuch who will come under no Government; were it reaſonable therefore to ſay, that *Government* is not ſuch a thing as the World have agreed in, and an Inſtitution Univerſally founded in Natural Light? Though ſome men are born blind, yet *Eye-ſight*, I hope is univerſal. VVere it any way reaſonable to be endured that the plaineſt Demonſtrable Propoſition in *Mathematicks*, ſhould be denied to be univerſally true all the World over, becauſe ſome men will deny it? which, if mens civil intereſts,

intereſts, and worldly concerns were as much engaged about, as they are about other things, there is no doubt but they would; and be as poſitive and vehement in their negation, as they are in denying other things, meerly becauſe they would not have them to be. If this Objection were of any force, 'twere in the power of any men (either ſottiſhly ignorant, or perverſely peeviſh) to deny the univerſality of any, the plaineſt, either Moral or Divine Truth, when either they *cannot* or *will not* underſtand it. The Univerſality of any thing does not lie in every individual perſons reception of it: it depends not upon individual aſſents; but in that even and true proportion it bears to the *Univerſal Reaſon* of the World; and ſo it incorporates it ſelf into the univerſal Principle that rules the World. Whatever is, in it ſelf, truly reaſonable, is univerſally reaſonable, becauſe Reaſon is univerſal. Let never ſo many deny, that *three Angles in a Triangle, are equal to two right Angles*, or never ſo few underſtand it; yet 'tis an univerſal Truth, and muſt be ſo acknowledged. No abſurd thing could ever come into the World but that it has ſome Authors. *Ariſtotle* in his *Metaphyſicks*, *l.* 4. *c* 4. tells us, there were ſome that affirmed, *A thing might be, and might not*

be at the same time. Did that any way overthrow the generality of that maxim in Reason [That nothing could be, and could not be, at the same time:] *Cicero*, in his Book *de Natura Deorum*, has long since told us, *That nothing could be so absurd that had not some Philosopher for its Patron.* That we call Universal Consent in Mankind, must not be built upon every individual Consent; for then 'twere in the power of any one man, never so foolish or corrupt, to overthrow it; and considering the various defects and interests of Mankind, there could never be any such thing. Nor ought we, with any good Reason, to denominate Universal from every particular, unless every particular man in the world were infallible in his judgment. If ever there were such a thing in the World as *Universal Consent* to any thing, (wherein mens *interests* lay variously concern'd) it has been in this case. It was never any mans interest to deny, that two and two make four: but it has been, and is mens corrupt interest, to deny *there is a God*; that so they might live as they list. But yet, notwithstanding that the *Notion of God and Religion* has curb'd men in their appetites, and been directly opposite to their inclinations; yet it has prevailed in the World with an universality *superlative*

to

to what any one thing can pretend to. How will the *Atheiſt* ſpeed by trying his Principles in the World, if he denies Univerſality? Either he muſt go to the *major part*, or the *melior part*. If to the *major* part, he has millions againſt an individual; If to the *melior* part, all the Religious, Juſt, Righteous Men that have ever been, refer to an Eternal Rectitude in a Deity, and have been an united party, ſince the World began, againſt him.

For the ſecond Objection, [That this fear of a Deity in men is a thing *artificially infuſed into them, upon politick grounds, the better to keep them in ſubjection*; and is a Lye impoſed upon the World.]

The Anſwer lies eaſie. Firſt, This muſt be ſaid to it; 'tis a thing begg'd and taken for granted, without the leaſt *probation* in any ſort. The Atheiſt is wholly precarious in it. After what manner was this *Cheat* put upon the World? and at what time? and where are the authors on it? who ever gave any account of thoſe things? and no man could ever know them to be a *Cheat*, but he muſt be able to give an account of them to himſelf and others. Is it a thing likely, or to be credited, that a general

neral *Cheat* ſhould bow down the backs of all Mankind? and induce ſo many doubts, and fears, and troubles amongſt them, and give an interruption to the whole courſe of their corrupt living, and that there ſhould be no account of it? That they ſhould never diſcover it? nor make enquiry into it? but that it ſhould be everywhere ſwallowed, and taken as a thing granted? Let me ask the *Atheiſt* this queſtion? Where is there to be found a man that does not carry this very fear about himſelf, which he ſays, was impoſed as a *Cheat* upon others? When he can find me a man, that has, at no time, and upon no occaſion, any *fear about him*, arifrom *ſomewhat above him*; I will acknowledge, that man was capable of attempting to put it as a *Cheat* upon another. But if he felt it himſelf, and his own experience made it a Truth to himſelf, he could never intend it as a Cheat to another. Beſides, there muſt be a general concurrence in all parts of the World, to ſet this *Cheat* on foot: and it muſt univerſally take, and have the ſame ſucceſs in every place, and with all ſorts of perſons. For we find this fear of a God in every place where we go: And yet a vaſt number of places have been found out in the World, that never converſed with any other people, nor received any kind

kind of Manners or Principles from them. *Religion is,* as *Juſtinian* and the *Civilians* ſay truly, *the general and univerſal Law of Nations.* The moſt barbarous people in the World have often made Laws to put ſuch to death as denied all Religion. 'Tis boaſted of *Epicurus*, by that poetical *Epicure, Lucretius*, that he was the firſt that oppoſed Religion, and affronted the Gods. If he were ſo, then it ſeems, they had the univerſal and quiet poſſeſſion of the World before.

The *Atheiſt* will needs have you believe, *that Religion came firſt into the World by ſome accidental* FRIGHT: and Cuning Men improved that, to make Men believe there was ſomewhat above them. When Men heard it *thunder*, and were afraid, then they were told, that there was ſome body above, that was angry, and ſpake loud; and ſo they were couzened into a belief of a Deity.——But I would the *Atheiſt* would conſider, that if the notion of a Deity had been built only upon ſuch a foundation, it would ſoon have fallen. For when men came to diſcover the natural cauſe of *Thunder*, they would have abhorred ſuch a *Cheat*, and deteſted and ſcorned the notion of a God,

God, ten times the more. 'Twas the true fear of a Deity upon which all other things have operated. If men had not found it, they could never have made it. Men may miſlead it, but could never generally create it.

But that which ought to fix us in a ſatisfaction in this matter, and to prove this grand Objection of the *Atheiſt* to be moſt abſurd; and that Religion, and the fear of a Deity could never be a *Cheat* impoſed upon the World; is, that it lies directly oppoſite to common Reaſon to believe, that ſuch a thing as Religion ſhould be introduced, as the higheſt and moſt ſupreme concern of the World, and to which all others were to yield; and to which all mens inclinations (though they lay directly contrary to it) were to bow and conform, that had neither any *rational demonſtrations* externally to approve it ſelf by, to the Reaſons of men, nor at firſt found any principles within them that naturally inclined them to ſuch a thing. The Atheiſt falls (in his objection) under this unavoidable *Dilemma*: Either Religion had good Reaſons, and ſome real Grounds firſt to induce it, or it had not; if it had, then 'twas a real and true thing, and the world

World was no way abuſed in it; and the Atheiſt is gone in his objection. If it had not, (which by the *Atheiſts* principles, it had not: for, if there be no God, it never could have any) then you muſt believe, that all mankind ſuffered a notion to reign over them moſt croſs and oppoſite to their inclinations, that had not the leaſt truth in it, nor the leaſt thing belonging to it that could give it any reaſonable probation; nor had at the firſt, any natural innate intereſt in mens minds (but quite the contrary) to give it any (much leſs a total and general) reception amongſt men. He that will believe this might poſſibly be, muſt, in conſequence, believe that *Mankind is not rational*; nor that the World has ſuch a thing as Reaſon that governs it, for 'tis to believe the World to ſwallow a thing as reaſonable, that has not the leaſt evidence of Reaſon to be given of it. Whatſoever *Cheat* mankind could attempt one upon another, muſt be by the uſe of their Reaſon: and 'tis not to be imagined that Reaſon could invent a Cheat that Reaſon ſhould not diſcover; and that a thing falſe ſhould be made (by the help of Reaſon) ſo ſeemingly true, that Reaſon, at one time or other, ſhould not be able to detect it. For, firſt there is the univerſal Reaſon of all perſons

perſons and all ages againſt ſome particular mens reaſon: and then, there is a lie to be proved, and that to be made appear true and reaſonable (which is not in the leaſt ſo) by ſome private mens reaſon, againſt the reaſon of the whole World; that is, ſome few men muſt be able to perſwade the World there is a God; which (upon the *Atheiſts* principles) they could not only never ſhew them, but never be able to give them any rational account, by any *effects or operations* of him, that there was ſuch a thing, and gain an univerſal aſſent to it.

In ſhort, ſome men muſt tell the World, for their own private advantage, that there was a God; and the whole World muſt ſtraight be frighted with it, and believe it; and beget their children, and their children beget others again, and ſo on, with the ſame *fright* and belief of what they never ſaw, nor had the leaſt ground reaſonably to believe. Where is the man that can ſhew, that the World ever yet had a *publick Cheat* attempted upon it, but that in the ſame age it was contradicted, and the Cheat made manifeſt? Take it in *Mahumetaniſm*, or whatever you will. If there be no God, the gound of all Religion in fact is falſe; and all the deductions from it, miſtakes and

Non-

Nonſenſe. He that will ſide with the *Atheiſt*, and befriend him in this, muſt imagine that ſome (we know not who, in ages paſt all records, we know not when) ſhould, upon the account of their own private ends, be able to befool the Whole World; and introduce a thing as the Supreameſt part of the World, that had no reality in it, and ſo could not have the leaſt reaſonable account given of it; and yet that the whole World ſhould receive it, and ſubmit to it. He that can embrace this foppery, and believe it, I would never doubt to make him confeſs, againſt *Euclide* [*That a part is greater than the whole*;] and bring him to juſtifie the higheſt *Nonſenſe* that abſurdity it ſelf can attain to.

A ſecond Argument to conduct us towards God, and to prove that he made the World, ſhall be this; *The natural rectitude, and innate harmony of the World*; and the due ſubordination of things one to another, and to the whole of the World; all things concentring in one common end. This muſt needs come from an eternal Rectitude, and a ſupreme Director, the wiſeſt of all Workmen and Contrivers, if you admit Cauſes ſuperiour to Effects.

Can

Can you perſwade your Reaſon, that the Sun, and the Moon, and the Stars were by *chance* fixed in the Firmament? and that they do by *chance* keep a conſtant uninterrupted courſe? and make conſtant day and night, and a certain fixed determination of all times and ſeaſons? Can the *Atheiſt* (without impudent madneſs) perſwade himſelf, that *Seed-time* and *Harveſt*, and all the regular ſubordination of things one to another, in their proper uſes and dependencies, are owing to nothing but *chance*? Either they were ſo Eternally, or ſo in Time. If eternally, they could not be by Chance; for *Chance cannot be Eternal*: for, whatſoever was eternally ſo, could have no poſſibility of Chance, whether it ſhould be ſo, or not ſo. *Chance* is a Fiction, a *Phantaſm*, a thing without a real Being: there is no ſuch thing as Chance ever was or can be, either in things temporal, or eternal. A thing that is by Chance, muſt be ſuch a thing as comes to paſs without the neceſſary enforcement of any certain cauſe: A thing that might have been, or might not have been, or might any way have been otherwiſe than it is. But there is no ſuch thing now in the VVorld; and whatever was eternally ſo, was ever ſo, and without a poſſibility of ever being otherwiſe

wiſe ſo, or of ever being not ſo. If they come to be ſo in time, they muſt either make themſelves ſo, or be made ſo: *make themſelves ſo*, I have proved already, they could not; nothing can be the original cauſe of it ſelf; and therefore they muſt needs be made ſo: And if *made ſo*, then they could not come by *chance to be ſo*; Becauſe the World conſiſting of cauſes and effects, one thing ſtill cauſing another, and nothing without cauſe; there muſt neceſſarily and naturally be a Cauſe of theſe cauſes: and whatſoever cauſed theſe cauſes, muſt needs be a Cauſe, and the higheſt Cauſe. If the World were ever cauſed by any thing but it ſelf, it could never be by *Chance*; becauſe whatſoever cauſeth any thing, deſtroyes the being of it by *Chance*. For if it had a cauſe, there was a reaſon why it came to paſs; and if there were a reaſon why it came to paſs, then it did not come to paſs by *Chance*. And if the World, in the firſt matter of it, brought forth it ſelf by *Chance*, there could then never have been any thing but *Chance* in it: for Chance can produce nothing but Chance; there could have been no ſuch thing as a certain Cauſe in it. Now we evidently ſee the contrary, that there is no ſuch thing as *Chance* in the World. The whole

World is a great bundle of Causes and Effects. When we say a thing happens by *Chance*, we say and mean no more, but that it happened *unexpectedly*, and that we do not at present see the Cause of it. That we call *Lottery*, is nothing else, but taking the visible Effects of Causes we purposely conceal from our selves. He that shuffles Cards, does not know what Game he shall have, because he purposely hides the Cause from himself, and takes only the Effect. But no Man can therefore think there is such a thing as Chance in that: for if he looked upon the Cards, as he shuffled them, he would find his own disposal of them in such places, was the Cause of his Game. There is a certain fixed regularity in the Course of every thing, and a genuine dependance of one thing upon another. Nothing moves, nothing operates any way, but as 'tis moved and caused: which unanswerably shews, That nothing in the World hath any motion or operations *innately* and *primarily* in it self, but comes all from a first Mover and infinite Cause of every thing. Whatsoever we see come to pass, though at the present wee cannot point out the Cause, yet we see enough visible in it, to assure us *it has some Cause*. He that cannot give a punctual demonstrative Reason

ſon for the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, yet ſees enough in it (by the conſtancy of it, the certain time it keeps, and the due correſpondency it holds to ſome of the Heavenly *Bodies*) to ſatisfie him, that there is a Natural Cauſe of it, and a Reaſon to be given for it; and that 'tis not poſſible to be a thing by Chance; but is a thing linked into the round of the World, and bears its proportion to the general Subordination and Harmony of things. If the *Atheiſt* be ſo ridiculouſly fooliſh as to ſay, that all that we ſee, and call Order and Method, is nothing but *Chance*; and that every thing happens ſtill by *Chance* ſo to be as we ſee it to be; he muſt either palpably confute himſelf, or elſe deny all the neceſſary Cauſes and Effects we ſee in the World; and tell us, That what we ſee conſtantly to be, (and never was known nor ſeen otherwiſe to be; and, in the reaſon of the Things themſelves muſt needs be ſo, and cannot be otherwiſe;) is a thing of *meer Chance*, and ſo may happen to be otherwiſe: That is, he muſt ſay, that Rain muſt not neceſſarily moiſten the Earth, but may perhaps ſcorch it, and burn it up; and that the Sun muſt not neceſſarily heat me, but may perhaps cool me, and chill me; and that Summer is not

neceſſary to come as it does, but may chance to come in the place of Winter, and Winter in the place of Summer. For if theſe things have no foundation but Chance, they may, by Chance, be otherwiſe than now they are. The Rational Soul abhors Chance; it makes a Reaſon of no uſe. 'Tis ſtrange, *Chance* ſhould frame the World and frame the higheſt Principle in it with a perfect antipathy to it ſelf, and to be of no uſe at all to it! For 'tis to no purpoſe, to think, reaſon, or debate about what comes by Chance. It forbids all foreſight, and all rational Deductions; and that ſupremeſt acting of a wiſe man, *to fit and ſuit Means to Ends.*

Beſides, there is this further evidence of God to us, in this *rectitude* we find in the frame of the World; *That direct Contraries* (and ſuch as are in their natures deſtructive one to another) *are over-ruled to a perfect Harmony and Coalition,* in the propagation of the World. How could ever contrary elements of Fire and Water (how could all other natural Oppoſites) be reconciled, and made to conſiſt together in the compoſition of things, but that there is ſomething above them, that over-rules them as he pleaſes? 'Twere utterly impoſſible, without that ever to be. 'Tis evident likewiſe

likewise by this, that the World hath not been for ever; for these *Contraries*, of which the matter of the World consists, could not have been *eternal*; Contrariety cannot be in Eternity. And therefore those *Philosophers* heretofore were justly condemned of folly and ignorance, who (when they could not resolve the Doubt [*How Evil should first come into the World, if there was but one God, and that one God Infinitely good*]? fled to the refuge of this Assertion, *That there was an Eternal good Being, and an Eternal ill Being*, that equally from Eternity were the Authors of both Principles. Now that this is absurd, and that things contrary each to other, cannot be Eternal, seems plain by these three Reasons.

First, In direct *Contrariety there must be imperfection and deficiency.* For where two things are both perfect, they cannot be in Contrariety, unless perfection can oppose it self. 'Tis Imperfection makes Opposition. Every thing that is eternal, I have proved before, must needs be perfect. And things perfect cannot lie in Contrariety one to another, because, in *perfection* there is the height of *harmony*.

Secondly, *Opposition intends Destruction.* 'Tis the end of Contraries; where Con-

raries are, each naturally strives to be predominant by destroying the other. Now things Eternal can never cease to be, nor to be otherwise than they ever were. Therefore such Contrariety can never be where there is Perfection: because things perfect cannot innately tend to Impossibilities; for that were the highest Imperfection. And here is an utter Impossibility in the End. For Eternal Things can never alter nor destroy each other. 'Twere to imagine Eternal Things eternally tending to destroy Eternity: than which nothing can be more impossible.

Thirdly, Whatever we suppose self-originated and eternal, must needs swallow up all Being and Perfection in it self; and so all other Beings must necessarily be derived from it; and so it can be but one. This visible experimented Truth, [*That all things in the World, though never so opposite in themselves, do all regularly and necessarily issue themselves into one common End: and that the World is a great piece of order and harmony*;] directly opposeth the grand *Hypothesis* of *Epicurus* who ascribes the World to meer Chance, and will have no other beginning of it, but a *casual* motion of certain *small particles*, which we call *Atoms*. The whole of his Principles is to make us

believe,

believe, That there is an *infinite Ultra-mundan Space, an infinite Inanity, where there are an infinite company of Atoms; and theſe Atoms infinitely poſſeſſed with an internal vigour called* Gravity, *which occaſioned their eternal motion: and ſo, by their perpetual motion, and various agitation in that infinite Space, they came to meet and encounter each other: and by meer Chance and Hap of ſuch Encounters, came into the Conjunction we ſee, and by that meer Chance made up this whole World, and moved and danced themſelves into all viſible Beings*——The ridiculouſneſs of which precarious Notion, and wholly begged Suppoſition, I ſhall evidence by theſe Conſiderations following.

First, Theſe *Atoms*, in this fancied Vacuity; were either *temporally* there, or *eternally* there. If *temporally*, then they were cauſed and muſt be placed there by ſomewhat before them and above them; and then we muſt come to *Divinity*. If eternally; then they muſt, of neceſſity, have been without alteration there ſtill, and ſo eternally there. For whatſoever is *Eternal*, muſt neceſſarily be *Unchangeable*; for whatever Being was eternal, can neither ceaſe to be as it was; nor can ever produce any other thing by varying its own form, and ceaſing it ſelf to be as it ever

was. For, ſuppoſe that *Atoms* loſe not their own exiſtence by any Being they conſtitute, yet I am ſure, in that variety of Beings the World is filled with, if they conſiſt of theſe *Atoms*, they are not in the ſame poſture they were in, when they were moving and dancing up and down in that infinite ſpace; ſo that by this Notion, here is an Infinite of two pieces viſibly, beſides how many more it may conſiſt of, after. For theſe *Atoms* are ſaid to be infinitely moving one while in the infinite ſpace, and another while they are interrupted by meeting one another in that infinite Motion, and then they are turned into Bodies, and all parts of the World; and when thoſe Compoſitions are diſſolved, who can preſage what will come of them then? So that things are made to be Infinite, and yet Changeable, which is impoſſible: for what was infinitely ſo, muſt ever continue to be ſo. Nor can any thing be infinite in Change: becauſe, what infinitely was, was the higheſt perfection of being, and ſo can never alter nor change it ſelf. Change is a perfect relative to Imperfection. Whatever is infinite has the higheſt Perfection: and to imagine then a change in what is Infinite, were to imagine a change from the higheſt Perfection; which is unimaginable and impoſble.

Secondly,

Secondly, If the *dancing motion* of theſe *Atoms*, in this fancied ſpace, did by Chance firſt dance the World into this *form*; and *caper'd* the Sun Moon, and Stars into their ſtations above us; and placed every thing in the poſture it is in about us, and below us; what is the Reaſon theſe *Atoms* never danced themſelves into any thing ſince? If they had an Eternal Motion in themſelves; they muſt needs move ſtill. Where is there any viſible production by ſuch a concourſe of Atoms? 'Tis a Horſe begets a Horſe, and one thing begets another: Where is any thing made ſo by *Atoms*, as the World is ſaid to be at firſt made by them? If *Atoms* ſtill be the parts of all compoſitions, 'tis plain, they do not compound them in the ſame way they did at firſt. A Man that is begotten by another Man, and brought forth by a Woman, has ſurely another kind of make, than he had, that was made by a Chance-hit of ſome *Atoms* one againſt another, as they were whirling about in the Infinite ſpace. And for that *Infinity of Worlds* that is produced (as *Epicurus* will needs have you believe) by the *infinity of Atoms* in the Infinite ſpace, 'tis no other than an eminent piece of *Lunacy*, and a Chimæra very well agreeing to the reſt of the *Atomical* Doctrine. For he can-

not bring the least Reason to prove it, unless you let him first beg the Question, and grant him an *infinity of Atoms*, that so he may argue from an infinity of Matter, to an infinity of Worlds.

Thirdly, The casual Conjunction of these *Atoms* could not, by that Chance make the World; because 'tis made with a principle of Reason: and they could not have induced such a Principle by any Chance, unless some way or other they had had it inherent in themselves before; for nothing can transfer that to another, which it hath not it self. And if they had been possest with that principle of Reason, if *Epicurus* his *Atoms* had been rational *Atoms*, (and truly he might as well have begged and supposed them into Reason as Motion: for bare Matter can no more be proved to have an intrinsick Motion in it, which would make it absolutely necessary for all Matter to move at all times, than it can be proved to Think, Will and Reason; and he that beggs and takes things for granted without the trouble of proof, should take all that would serve his turn) I say, had *Epicurus* his *Atoms* been Reasonable *Atoms*, they would never have done any thing by Chance, because they had a *Superior Principle* to do it by; they would never

ver have put that to the venture, which might have been made *certain*. Their own Principle would have inſtructed them not to have put that to the venture of Chance, whether it ſhould be, or ſhould not be, which, by Reaſon, might have been made certain to be. A Man that hath Eyes would never ſhut them, and go to diſcover colours by feeling. Every ſuperiour Principle muſt needs act above an inferiour. Whatever did happen, by meer Chance, to Be, had a Power to Be, and by Reaſon might have been made certain to Be. How monſtrouſly unreaſonable is it to believe, that theſe *Atoms* (that had nothing in themſelves but bare Matter and Motion, upon the beſt ſuppoſition) ſhould produce in Man, and in nothing elſe, a *rational Soul!* and that that in Man, which we call the rational Soul, ſhould be nothing elſe but the more active and generous part of theſe *Atoms*! which became ſo, by being more ſmooth and round than the reſt! which you muſt believe fell by Chance, all to the ſhare of Men; and no other Being had the hap to have any of them in their Compoſitions. We muſt alſo believe theſe *Eternal Atoms* to be ſome of one ſize, and ſome of another; ſome of one quality, and ſome of another, and yet all Eternal: which is a contra-

contradiction to all Notion of Eternity.

Fourthly, Suppose (in these *Atoms*) Matter and Motion, the World could never come to be made fortuitously thereby. For, *First*, all Motion in every thing, must either be from a Superiour Mover, or from an innate and self-originated Principle of Motion in it self. If from a Superior Mover, then we come to God. If from an Innate Motion, that any thing hath in and from it self, that Motion must needs be Eternal: For nothing can move, that is not set on work, or that doth not infinitely set it self on work. If Motion have Beginning, it must own it self to some Beginner: if it have no Beginning, it must be Infinite and Eternal: and there needs no better or other Argument to prove that any Motion had a Beginning, than when we see it has an Ending; for as all Mechanick Motion, by its coming to an end, shews plainly it had a *primum movens*, and was set on work; so does all other Motion, by its perioding and ending, declare plainly, it had its beginning *ab extra*; and is not self-originated and Eternal: So that if the *Motion of these Atoms* came from a first Mover, then they came from a Cause; and their Motion must needs be regular and corresponding to that first Cause.

Cauſe. If they had no firſt Mover, then their Motion muſt be Eternal, as *Epicurus* ſayes it is; and nothing, that moves Eternally, can move by Chance; becauſe it muſt needs have the higheſt Perfection of Motion: And where that is, 'tis impoſſible to ſuppoſe any ſuch thing as Chance. For whatever did eternally move, can never ceaſe ſo to move; and ſo can have no ſuch thing as Chance converſant about it. *Secondly*, Matter it ſelf cannot be moved *fortuitouſly*, by Motion ſuppoſed inherent in it: that is utterly impoſſible; becauſe all Matter determines its own Motion. Heavy things move downward, and cannot fortuitouſly move upward. Had there been nothing but Chance to cement the World, the *heavy* part would have been ſure to have gone *downward*, and the *light* part *upward*; and they would never have met, nor pieced together. The Motion of things is determined in the nature of their Being. And therefore we cannot reaſonably ſay, that bare Matter and Motion ever cauſed any thing by Chance; unleſs you will ſay, it cauſed every thing to be by Chance, juſt as it *muſt needs* be, and *neceſſarily* be, which is a contradiction. Who can believe *Chance* the Cauſe, and *Certainty* the *Effect*? We ſe eall things moving in perfect order; and not only

only our Experience aſſures us of this, but our Reaſon ſhews us, it muſt neceſſarily ſo come to paſs. For ſuch Cauſes do produce ſuch Effects ſuitable to the nature & being of things, and an intrinſick Cauſality and innate Dependence upon each other; which muſt needs be the Effect of the ſupreme and great Cauſe of all. Let any Man conſider that noble Principle in Man, the *rational Soul*, with the ſuitableneſs of it to govern himſelf and the reſt of the World; and how all things, in their being and dependency lie proportioned to ſuch a ſuperiority. Let him view the make of a Man and a Woman, and ſee how ſuitable, and how neceſſary they are one to another in their very compoſition; and how the *Male* and the *Female*, in all other Creatures, are adapted to propagate their own kind, and to be uſeful each to other; and the Inſtinct they carry about them ſo to be. Let him look upon the faces of Men and Women, and conſider them; there never having been yet ſeen any two without ſome variety. Let him look above him, and below him, and round about him, and ſee what *harmony* there is between the Heavens and the Earth: how the well-being of the one depends upon the influence of the other; and how certain and regular thoſe are, by which

all

all Times and Seaſons are exactly determined. Let him look upon the *Sea*, and conſider how uſeful that is to the World, to introduce a Trade and Commerce among all Nations, and to make each one capable of enjoying the good of all the reſt. Let him view the conſtant courſe of its Ebbings and flowings; and the ſtanding Law of its *Boundaries*, whereby ſuch a *maſs of Waters* are ſtill kept in one channel, and continued in their proper ſtation. And when he has viewed theſe and a thouſand things more, that lye obvious to his reaſonable Contemplation; if he then think the compoſition of the whole Univerſe, and all the parts of it, and the grand *Oeconomy* that is in it, came from *nothing but meer Chance*, he renders himſelf a perſon fitter for *Bedlam* than *Diſputation*. Yet ſuch wretched ſhifts are men forced to fly to, when they are labouring to exclude the Notion of God, and baniſh a Deity out of the World.

The *Epicurean Atomiſt* falls plainly under the heavy ſtrokes of ſeveral groſs abſurdities. *Firſt*, He makes his *Atoms* (which are the matter of which he will have the World to conſiſt) to move about in his *ultra-Mundan ſpace*, without a tendency to a Center. Which is perfectly impoſſible, that any matter ſhould move, by a Motion innate

innate in it, without tendency to ſome Center or other. He affirms, [his *Atoms* could never diſcontinue their Motion, but when they encountred other *Atoms*, and were, by that impulſe, deflected into another courſe.] To believe this, were to deny one of the plaineſt experimental Truths in Philoſophy; and to ſuppoſe Matter moving without either a *terminus à quo*, or a *terminus ad quem*. *Secondly*, He aſcribes that to dull Matter, and ſenſleſs Motion, which we aſcribe to God infinitely Perfect. For he ſuppoſes his *Atoms infinite*, and in an *infinite ſpace*: And ſo he makes things mutable, and things imperfect, infinite. For if theſe *Atoms* had not been ſo, they muſt needs have continued without variation or change, as once they were, and (as he ſaies) eternally they were. Whatever he objects againſt us about the Infinity of God, with ten times more force he objects the ſame againſt himſelf, for the Infinity of his own *Atoms* and ſuppoſed *Inanity*. *Thirdly*, He makes more to ariſe out of his *Matter* and *Motion*, than is contained in the *Matter* and *Motion* themſelves; which is the rational Soul of Man. *Fourthly*, He makes (*firſt*) eternal Cauſes to have chanceable Effects; and then thoſe chanceable Effects to be the cauſe of all Certainty

and

and Regularity. He makes Eternal Cauſes to have Chanceable Effects; for he ſaies himſelf, [*His Atoms, and his ultra-mundan ſpace are Eternal, and the Motion of theſe Atoms eternal likewiſe in it:*] And the Effect of theſe Eternal Cauſes is, that by Chance they make this World; and this Chance, in making the World, hath produced all the Certainty, Conſtancy, Order, Beauty and Regularity of it. There cannot be Two things more ridiculouſly ſaid, than firſt, to make Chance the Effect of an Eternal Cauſe, and ſo the moſt certain Cauſe; and ſecondly, to make Chance the Cauſe of all Order and Certainty. 'Tis as true to ſay, the Sun is the Cauſe of all Darkneſs; and Wiſdom the true Mother of all Folly. Laſtly, He makes Things to cauſe themſelves; which is the ſupremeſt of all *nonſenſe*. For (ſaies he) *theſe moving particles, this Matter and Motion, make up the Univerſe*: And ſo, if there be nothing above them, they muſt needs make themſelves the Univerſe. If this Matter and Motion be made and moved, 'tis not Eternal; if you ſuppoſe it is Eternal, then that which is Eternal varies it ſelf into all Forms and Compoſitions; and ſo is not unchangeable, which all Eternal Things are. Although that which is Infinite may beget

variety of other things diſtinct from its own being, as God himſelf doth; yet that which is Infinite cannot do ſo, by varying it ſelf, which theſe *Atoms* do, and ſo become changable; which cannot be annexed to what is Infinite. When theſe *Atoms* turn themſelves, by their motion, into Bodies, and all other parts of the World (ſuppoſing all the Principles of the *Atomical Philoſophy*, that they deſtroy not themſelves;) they alter the Form and Manner of their Exiſtence; and ſo, I am ſure, are not as they eternally were. Nor could they indeed be Eternal; becauſe, had they been Eternal in the poſture they were, they would have had Perfection in that poſture, and ſo could never have changed from what was infinitly perfect. In ſhort, therefore, either the World was Eternal in ſome *pre-exiſting matter* to what we ſee, (either *Atoms*, or what you will:) or it was Eternal juſt in the courſe we now ſee it. If it were Eternal in any *mere exiſting Matter*, that Matter muſt needs ceaſe to be ſo, by varying it ſelf into this World: unleſs you will make things changable and imperfect, Infinite, which is impoſſible. Whatever eternally was, muſt eternally remain as it was, or elſe 'tis not Eternal. 'Tis monſtrouſly abſurd to talk of a changeable Eternity.

Eternity. If you take the other way, (to make the World Eternal juſt as we ſee it) you muſt unavoidably make Corruption, Generation and all parts of the round and courſe of the World, Eternal too; unleſs you admit *priority* and *poſteriority*, which are plainly enough deſtructive to all notion of Eternity. If any thing had been unchangeable and unalterable, and cauſed other things diſtinct from it ſelf, (as we ſay God does,) it had altered the caſe: but to ſay the World is Eternal, when every part that makes the whole of it ſelf, and all the matter of the World is perpetually altering and varying, 'tis utterly impoſſible, without making the courſe of it in changes, in generating, and corrupting particular forms, eternal too. Though God created variety of creatures, that, ſeveral waies, alter and change; yet he (in his own Being) is unchangeable, and ſtill the ſame he ever was. If he had dilated his own Being, and ſpread it into the variety of the World, and made the World out of himſelf, and ſubſiſted only in it, it had been impoſſible he ſhould have been eternal: becauſe then, he would not now have been what he ever before had been.

A third Argument to prove that God

is, and that he made the World, is, *that witneſs, that he hath left to himſelf and his own Being, in the* CONSCIENCES *of men.* This is ſo ſafe, and ſo ſure a way to bring us to God, that, unleſs we had ſeen him face to face, there could not have been any thing that could poſſibly have given us a clearer evidence of the Being of God, and of the Relation our own beings have to him, than this hath done. The underſtanding Faculty of Man is the nobleſt part of the World; and in that faculty God hath eſtabliſhed the knowledge of himſelf. Conſcience in a man, is nothings but the true reſult of his Underſtanding about himſelf, in reference to a ſupreme Being above him: Which (if there were no God) were to no purpoſe, and the nobleſt exerciſe of Man in his rational part would be wholly in vain; which *Ariſtotle* would not endure to have thought, of the meaneſt and loweſt product of Nature. He rightly denied, that *Nature did the leaſt thing in vain.* That we call *Conſcience*, is not only ſeated in the Underſtanding of Man, but has a peculiarity in the exerciſe of that Underſtanding, purely relating to it ſelf. For *Conſcience* is not only an ability in the Underſtanding, (as 'tis relating to other matters)

ters) when a Man will make uſe of it to determine his *Actions* and his Condition, in reference to God and a ſuperiour Being: But Conſcience carries, in its deſcription, an innate inſtinct, and neceſſary inclination in the Underſtanding to operate this way; and to paſs a continual Judgment upon a Mans ſelf, in all a Man does, with reference to God, and that primary and ſupreme concern of pleaſing Him, and correſponding to his Will. Can we ſuppoſe this great Wheel of the Underſtanding ſhould move this way, without a firſt Mover? And move about nothing? Move in vain? Whence ſhould this Principle in Man come? We find it written in fair Characters all the World over. Man ſees nothing in the World, but what is inferior to him, and under his juriſdiction. If God had not been *Above*, there could never have been any ſuch thing as Fear and Conſcience *Below*. There could never have been an univerſal Fear of an *Inviſible Nothing* in all rational Creatures. God and Conſcience are perfect Relatives. How is it poſſible to believe a diſtinction of Good and Evil, and a Conſcience about them (in order to Reward and Puniſhment from a Supreme Power) ſhould be naturally inherent in every Man, as we find it is; unleſs ſome

superior Power had made us, and fixed such Principles in us, by our first Constitution? How comes it to pass, that Good is preferred before Evil, when there is more visible in the World of the one than of the other, and Mens inclinations lie more to Evil than Good? But that God (in our very make) hath determined those things, and left an indelible Testimony in our own Souls about them. No Man can (if he would) think Evil to be better than Good, and put one in the place of the other; which shews plainly, that the Soul of Man relates to a Supreme Being that made him, and is above him. Can we believe, that all the exercise of Mens *Consciences*, in the Hopes and Fears we find fixed in them, about a condition after this life, to be meer *Delusions*? which they be, if there be no God. The Atheist himself, with all his skill, cannot disband his own Fears, nor run away from his own Conscience, no more than he can run away from himself: he finds seasons, wherein he smarts under the lashes of it. Conscience is such a thing, as is not (in the principle of it) *discoursed into Men*, but born with them. Nor can you ever discourse Men out of it; nor can a Man, at his pleasure, argue it from himself. The Soul of Man is

constituted

conſtituted with a diſtinction of Good and Evil, in reference to a ſuperiour Being, that has a ſupremacy over it. Every Mans own Breaſt is the proof of this: A Mans own Soul ſubſcribes to it. Men are full of exerciſes of Conſcience about things not puniſhable in this World, nor any way diſcernable here. A Man may as well deny that Love and Hatred are inherent in men, as that Conſcience is inherent in them, and a reference to ſomewhat above them. A Man, by counterwork, may ſooner get a conqueſt over any part of himſelf, than over that we call *Conſcience*: becauſe in every ſtep he takes that way, whether he will or no, he is his own Executioner Whither will the *Atheiſt* flee from himſelf, to find ſhelter againſt the force of this undeniable Argument?

Two things he uſually recurrs to, (and 'tis much the ſame defence he made againſt that univerſal Acknowledgement there hath been of a Deity in the World) Firſt, ſayes the Atheiſt [*This you call Conſcience in Men, is nothing but Fear habituated in them by tales that were at the firſt told them, and ſo transferred from one to another, about inviſible things.*] And ſecondly, *That it is not true, in fact, that all Men are Troubled with this we call Conſcience; for*

many have no ſuch thing, nor find any workings of it at all, in themſelves.]

To the firſt, I anſwer. Conſcience in Men could never be begotten in them by any *humane Contrivance*: becauſe 'tis a thing can never be confined within any humane bounds. Other Men are ſo far from having the power over a Mans Conſcience, that a Man cannot govern it himſelf. Conſcience gives its evidence whether we like it or not. The work of Conſcience is often to oppoſe a Man himſelf in the *violent emanations* of his own Will. If it had been at the firſt created by invented Fictions and Fables, thoſe would have contained the *boundaries* of it: and by the ſame way Men were at the firſt poſſeſſed with it, they might more reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be capable, at any time, of being delivered from it; becauſe (upon the *Atheiſts* grounds) if there be no God, it was begotten by a Lye; and 'tis ſurely poſſible to be nulled by confeſſing the Lye and revealing the Truth. And yet we find, let men ſay as long as they will' *there is no God*, Conſcience will ſtill abide.

Secondly, If Conſcience had its firſt riſe from

from Mens being poſſeſſed with Notions of feigned and pretended Deities, and *Non-entities* of that kind; how can it (with any good Reaſon) be conceived, that any Man ſhould ever arrive at ſuch an exerciſe of Conſcience, as to oppoſe all the Men in the World, and his own inclinations beſides, upon the *ſingle account of Conſcience?* And yet this often falls out to be the caſe: Conſcience in a Man carries it againſt himſelf, and all others oppoſing it. Now if there be no real God, to make impreſſion upon his Conſcience, nor to which (by a natural inſtinct) his Conſcience can refer; and all Men agree to tell him things contrary to what he calls his Conſcience; and all his own inclinations ſtrongly oppoſe too; whence ſhould ſuch a Conſcience and ſuch a Principle come? The *Atheiſt* muſt of neceſſity make a ſally out of this World to ſomewhat that is really and truely above it, and beyond it, and that made it; or elſe the ground of ſuch a circumſtanced Conſcience can never be found out.

Thirdly, Conſcience in Men could never be ſo baſely deſcended, nor come from ſo *mean an original*, as the *Atheiſt* pretends; and it have ſo noble and real Effects upon Mankind, and ſo much to their general and particlarn

particular Good and Advantage, as it really has. It layes an Arreſt upon Men, and reſtrains them from open and ſecret Evil and Injuſtice: and provokes them to do (and gives them ſatisfaction in doing) whatever is Juſt and Righteous. Nothing is more certain and real than the Effects of Conſcience, both in the trouble it gives Men, and alſo in the ſatisfaction it affords them. 'Tis impoſſible ſuch general and real Effects ſhould ariſe from a *very Lye*, a *meer Nothing*. He that will ſuppoſe that, debaſeth Mankind ſo far, that there can be no certainty in the word of any thing Men have, or of any thing they are. For though ſome particular perſons may be, by ſome accidental means, ſingly poſſeſt with fooliſh and vain conceits; yet 'tis ridiculous to conceive, that *Mankind* ſhould *all* be poſſeſt with *one Fancy* without the leaſt ground for it; and that Fancy ſhould univerſally operate in the ſame way. He that aims to make all the World uncertain in what they generally agree in, I wonder where he intends to lay a foundation of any certainty amongſt Mankind! Whatever wants a natural innate evidence to Reaſon, can never be ſuppoſed to be received by the univerſal Reaſon of the World: unleſs you will ſuppoſe Reaſon not to be Reaſon, and

make

make it a meer *Nullity*. Men every where find the workings of Conſcience ſo real, that they produce Troubles the whole World cannot remove; and ſuch peace and ſatisfaction in Men, that neither the whole World, nor themſelves by any other workings of their own Souls, could lead themſelves into. Which muſt needs inſure us, that there is an intercourſe between God, and that we call Conſcience; and that it hath a peculiar derivation from, and relation to Him, and is not begotten by a ſlaviſh ſubjected crudulity to vain impoſed *Fantaſms*, and *empty Nothings*.

Had there not been Truth in the Notion of God, (and ſo real a ground for Conſcience) and had not the principle of Conſcience been naturally inherent in Mankind, Men would never have been capable of being deceived in a falſe Object of Worſhip. The truth is, *Religion* (let it be never ſo heterodox and erroneous) confirms the Principle of Religion it ſelf, and the tendency that is in Men toward God and the true Religion. For take *Mahumetaniſm*, or what falſe Religion you will, the ground of Mens ſubjection to it was an in-bred Devotion that is to God above them; their ignorance of whom, made them liable to pay that Devotion, where they were deluded

and

and mistaken. I doubt not but that every person, that has performed any Worship since the World began, though never so false, had an implicite tendency (through that innate Principle that was in him) *to the true God.* We will suppose the most the Atheist can desire us to suppose for his advantage in this case; that Men under a false Worship may have the same exercise of Conscience, (in trouble, and satisfaction) that others have in that we call the True and Right Knowledge of God. Suppose a *Mahumetan* as much concerned in matter of Conscience as a Christian; and the Atheist thence inferring that Conscience universally may be a *Cheat* upon Men every-where, because it is so there in that particular case: Yet this will no way help him; for, in this case, the Principle of Conscience it self is no Cheat put upon them: the *Cheat* lies in the wrong Exercise and Application of Conscience, of which we are not speaking, but of Conscience it self. This supposeth Conscience in them. 'Tis not here, whether Conscience or no Conscience; a God, or no God: But whether a True God, or a false God; the being of a supreme Power is admitted: the deceit lies in the Application. 'Tis not all one to

say,

ſay, [*Becauſe I am deceived in the Exerciſe of Conſcience, therefore I may be as well be deceived in the Principle of Conſcience it ſelf:*] And [*that 'tis as eaſie to make Conſcience in men by deceit, as to miſlead it when it is exiſting.*] Becauſe, in the one caſe, when Men are deceived and deluded in their Underſtandings, and ſo in their Conſciences, about the Object and manner of Worſhip, there is a viſible ground for ſuch a Deceit, and a rational account to be given of it: Becauſe there is a real God exiſting, and a certain principle of Conſcience in Men towards him, upon which (through their weakneſs and ignorance) a Cheat may operate. But in the other caſe, *to beget ſuch a Principle as Conſcience* it ſelf, by a Cheat in men, and then apply it as we pleaſe, is moſt abſurd to imagine: becauſe here is no ground at all for ſuch a Cheat to be built upon. For if there be no God, as the Atheiſt ſaies there is not, I am ſure there is no real ground then for impoſing the *Cheat of Conſcience* upon the World. In the one caſe I perſwade a man to worſhip a falſe God, where there is really a true God, and his Conſcience tells him, he muſt worſhip ſome God: and in the other caſe, I perſwade him to believe he muſt worſhip

ſhip ſome God, when he has no ſenſe of any God, and that there is really no God. The truth is, all the *falſe Copies of a Deity* in the World declare plainly there is ſome *true Original*. Men would never have gone about to counterfeit Silver, if there had been no ſuch Metal. Men have been ſtill ſo prone to worſhip *ſomething*, that they have layen the more open and liable to miſtakes and Cheats in the *objects* and *manner* of Worſhip. The trouble and ſatisfaction men have in their Conſcience when 'tis eroneous, highly confirms, and no way deſtroyes this principle of Conſcience it ſelf. The greater the Cheat is upon Men in the *manner* of Worſhip, the more evident is the principle of Worſhip within them. He that is deceived in the *object* of his Love, in loving trifles and baubles, and things not worth love, gives the ſtronger evidence of ſuch a principle as Love being in him. All falſe Worſhip is granted upon that innate ſubjection Men are born withall to the true God. If there had been no true God, *Mahomet* would never have been worſhipped; nor would there ever have been any Idols or falſe Gods. Though men fall into the thickeſt darkneſs about the *objects* and *manner* of Worſhip, yet

yet the Principle of Conſcience and Worſhip ſtill remains, and is thereby juſtified and aſſerted.

For the Atheiſt's ſecond Objection, which is againſt the Univerſality of this Principle in men, that we call Conſcience, [*That 'tis not general: and that many finde no ſuch thing in themſelves.*] The Anſwer is, 'Tis not neceſſary upon his own ſuppoſition granted, that every *Univerſal* ſhould be made up of each *individual* particular: that I have proved before. Suppoſe a Man has debauched himſelf into ſo great a ſottiſhneſs, that he has no uſe of Reaſon; ſuppoſe a Man has lived ſo long that *he dotes*, and is childiſh; will you ſay, therefore, Reaſon is not an Univerſal Principle? If the *Atheiſt* ſay, theſe things happen upon particular accidents; ſo ſay I, does the other, if any ſuch thing ever fall out to be. Where will you find a Man (without a particular and extraordinary remark upon him) without ſome Conſcience? But ſuppoſe a Man, by God's particular permiſſion, have for a time extinguiſhed the exerciſe of that Principle, and has taken much pains to *ſear it up*: does that argue that there never was in him any ſuch principle as Conſcience? or

does

does it not rather establish the truth of it? The *Atheist* will often tell you, that what men call *Conscience*, is nothing but *Melancholy* and morose thoughts of men, when they are in ill humours. But 'tis to be strongly presumed he finds some image of it in himself, that makes him able so to *nick-name* it in others. Let any, the highest Atheist tell me, whether ever he got, for any time, rid of his Conscience, without being at some trouble to oppose it? And let him dress it up as he will, and give it what name he will, and oppose it under what notion he will; yet 'tis evident, he landed in this World with such a Principle; and let me tell him, he can never murder it so sure, but that, for ought he knows, it may revive upon him again. Let any Man intoxicate himself, and be never so drunk, yet his Reason will probably have a Resurrection. He cannot be sure to immerge that Principle unless he drown his own Being. When he awakes, he will find he is a Man, though he did what he could to make himself a Beast. Those Monsters of men amongst the *Roman Emperours*, who triumphed most in pretending *Atheism*, (threatned the Wind if it blew upon them, and the Clouds if they rained upon them) betraied

betrayed, upon every ſmall occaſion, the dreadfulleſt fears imaginable. *Julian* the Apoſtate, at laſt, cryed out, *The Galilæan had overcome him.* The great *Hector* of the Gods, *Epicurus* himſelf, was the moſt eminent coward that ever lived, in thoſe things he moſt defied: nothing ever frighted any Man more than thoſe two things did him, *Death* and the *Gods*: ſo you ſhall find it reported in *Cicero*. His *Atoms* had not *ſolved his Conſcience*, nor cured him, it ſeems, of his fears; he was *certain* of them, though he bottom'd all the World upon *Chance*. How many are to be ſeen daily, that when they think they have ſafely interred their Conſcience, when they come to any extremity, ſoon find a revival of it again?

There is nothing ſo univerſally certain amongſt Mankind, but what is ſubject to variation in *Individuals*: which ſtrongly proves, that the World has not Immutability nor Eternity affixed to it. Sometimes we ſee ſuch Members of the Body, and ſuch Faculties of the Soul ceaſe to exert themſelves in particulars: but yet ſuch Monſters (for they are no better) ought not to deſtroy the general Character and Definition we give of Natural Beings. In this matter of Conſcience (which does

plainly admit the Being of a God, to which it hath immediate relation,) two things ſtrongly plead for the generality of it in all Men, above the generality of any one thing that belongs to them. *Firſt*, That 'tis the great *Truſtee* for God in the World. And (unleſs it be in ſome very extraordinary caſe, where God concurs with a Man to extinguiſh it, as a ſpecial and ſignal Judgment upon him) it ſeems Plain, that no Man can totally obliterate it in himſelf. *Secondly*, 'Tis the great *medium* he will judge the World by. He will deal with Men according to their light; and the Conſciences of Men ſhall perform that great office of *accuſing* or *excuſing*, in the great day. He that either actually has a Principle of Conſcience, or ever had ſuch a thing, or comes hereafter to find that ſuch a Principle is within him, gives a witneſs ſufficient to the *Being* of ſuch a Principle; and I believe the Atheiſt will undertake a hard task, to find *one individuat Man*, well in his Wits, that is not included in that compaſs. He that tells me, he hath no Conſcience, and expects I ſhould believe him; may as well expect that I ſhould take his word, if he ſhould tell me, he is not of the ſame compoſition with other Men: and does not ſee nor hear, though

though he has eyes and ears viſibly, as other Men have.

A fourth Argument to prove the truth of a ſupreme Being above the World, is, *The Miracles that have been wrought in the World.* This ſtabs the Atheiſt and mortally wounds him. If ever in fact, there were ſuch a thing as a *Miracle*, the Atheiſt is irrecoverably gone. All his *Hypotheſes* fall to the ground; all the fig-leaves he can get will never hide him from apparent nakedneſs and folly. To give this Argument its due force, I ſhall endeavour two things. *Firſt*, To prove that a *Miracle leads us directly to God*; and is, in its being, deſtructive to all an Atheiſt ſayes. And *Secondly*, That the *fact of ſuch Miracles* is true: and that we have good Reaſon to believe it is ſo; and that there have been often ſuch in the World.

A Miracle is properly, *that which could not come to paſs by any natural Cauſe.* If a Man *actually dead* ſhould be raiſed again, it were a thing could not be brought to paſs in any natural way; nor could any natural account be given of it. If a Man *born blind*, and that had no eyes, ſhould by a word ſpeaking, be made to ſee,

'twere a thing out of all humane reach to do. You muſt ſtep out of the World, and take a view of ſomething above it, to know how ſuch a thing could come to paſs. The working of a Miracle is the doing of that, which (apparently to our Senſes and our Reaſon) nothing viſible in the World could do. And if ſo, it muſt needs be done by ſomewhat that is ſuperiour to the World. Nay, 'tis ſometimes the doing of that, which is quite contrary to the natural motion and conſtant tendency of the whole Univerſe. If a Man be *once dead*, and that principle of Life and Motion that was in him be gone, 'tis natural for his Body to corrupt, and vary the form of its matter: Now to make ſuch a Man live again (who by the ſtanding Law of Nature died, and muſt by the ſame Law corrupt) is not only a thing above all natural Power, but a thing *directly contrary* to Nature, and perfectly inverts the whole courſe of it. For 'tis as much the reaſon and courſe of Nature for a man to die, as 'tis at the firſt for him to live. If therefore any ſuch thing were ever done in the World, it muſt neceſſarily be brought to paſs by a *Power above all natural Cauſes*, and the utmoſt ability of all natural Beings.

ings. We muſt needs erect a Throne for a Power ſuperiour to Nature, and ſuch a Power as muſt directly lead us to God. 'Tis as much a Miracle, and as far above all natural Power, to revive a Man actually dead, as to make a Man out of a ſtone, or form him from a lump of earth. Conſider the World, in which of the *Atheiſts* notions of it you will; if there be nothing *above* it, nor *beſides* it, then 'tis plainly impoſſible that any thing ſhould happen or come to paſs but what has its riſe and foundation from ſomewhat *within* it. For if there be nothing exiſting but this World, there can be nothing produced but what this World can produce. But, that we call a *Miracle* is ſuch a thing, as is quite beyond the Worlds production: neither the Reaſonable part, nor the Senſible part, nor the whole together, can produce a Miracle. Not the *Reaſonable part*: for the great and genuine buſineſs of Reaſon, is, to place things in their due dependencies each upon other; and to know Cauſes producing Effects; and means ſuited to Ends. Reaſon can never elevate any thing, in its operation, beyond it ſelf, nor force an act from it beyond the compaſs of its own Being. That Reaſon has an innate antipathy to: 'twere to ſet

Reason against it self, and say, Reason shall produce things without Reason, and against Reason. Reason cannot be imagined to deal in that, for which no Reason can be given. And therefore, when we see a *Miracle*, (a thing that can have no natural cause) our Reason directs us to look to somewhat above the World, that must needs be the Cause of it. *Not the Sensible part* of the World: for that can never alter its course. Nature is a perfect Law to it self, which it can never repeal. This we are assured of, not only by our experience of the constant course that is kept by all Natural Beings: but because they keep such a course, as carries an intrinsick Reason for it in their very nature and Being; and such a course as they must keep, and can keep no other. If you dig up a Tree, and cut off the Root, 'twill certainly die. This we are assured of, not only from the fact of it, that we continually find it so, but our Reason necessarily tells us, it must be so, and can be no otherwise. And therefore whatever is done above all Natural Power, and contrary to all Natural Operation, must needs silence our Sense and our Reason, and all parts of the World; and forceth us to recur to somewhat above the World, that

that muſt be Lord over it, and the great Diſpoſer of it. Two things ſeem to make it plain, that the whole World, and all the ability that Nature has, can never produce a *Miracle*. *Firſt*, Nature can never go beyond it ſelf, nor do any thing by a power above it ſelf. The bounds of every thing is its own being. 'Tis an abſurdity to ſay, a thing ſhould *out-do it ſelf*: or that the Effect ſhould be greater than the Cauſe. If any thing be done which is beyond all the power of Nature, that could never be cauſed by Nature. To cure a Man that is ſick of a Diſeaſe; or to raiſe a Man that is a natural Criple to a perfect ſoundneſs, by ſpeaking a word to him, is beyond all the Confines of Natural Power, and therefore cannot be an Effect ariſing from any Natural Cauſe: there being no ſuch thing, potentially, in nature it ſelf, nor any relative Operation natural in ſuch a way. *Secondly*, Nature cannot contradict it ſelf: becauſe, its productions are ſuitable to, and inherent in its own being. Nature is as a free agent, ſo a neceſſary agent. The fire cannot be cold, nor the Water hot; Throw Men into the fire, and if they be not burnt, they muſt be beholding to ſomewhat above Nature; for Nature will deſtroy them. If a Man ſhould walk in the Air

and not fall, and walk upon the Waters and not ſink, it muſt be by a help ſupernatural. For Nature ſhould, otherwiſe, oppoſe it ſelf; which it cannot do. And to ſay, its Effects ſhould ceaſe, is all one, as to ſay Nature it ſelf, in its own being, ſhould ceaſe, and ſo the World ſhould ceaſe. Whatſoever can go beyond the Power of Nature, and contradict the power of Nature, muſt needs be above the power of Nature; and what is ſo, muſt needs be above, the power of the World. And this doth two ways evidently overthrow the vain ſuppoſition of the Worlds Eternity. For, *Firſt*, If there be any Power above it, it cannot be Eternal: Unleſs you will make two Eternals, one above another; which is abſurd, and perfectly impoſſible. And *Secondly*, if ever the courſe of Nature and this World were ſtopped and croſſed, then I am ſure the World, in the courſe of it, cannot have been Eternal neither.

Two things are uſually objected againſt *Miracles*. Firſt, the *matter of Fact is denied*. And Secondly, *The Atheiſt* will tell you, *that thoſe things we call Miracles, were not really and truly ſo: but were extraordinary and unuſual things, brought about by ſome ſecret Natural Cauſe, though not known*

known nor perceived. For the firſt of theſe Objections, I will handle it diſtinctly by it ſelf.

To the ſecond, I anſwer. Every thing in the World was at the firſt, a *Miracle*: nor could any Reaſon be given of it. Which is a plain proof that God made the World; and that it did not make it ſelf. There was no other Cauſe of all Originals in Nature, and of the firſt things, that were in the World, but that God pleaſed to make them. No doubt, at the firſt, a Man might have called the Sun, or a Rainbow, a great Miracle. Nor could they ever find out any natural Cauſe of them, nor of the firſt Being of any thing. The whole World was a ſtupendious Miracle, and without any Reaſon to be given for it, but what lay in the Makers Breaſt. To me therefore that ſaying of *Ariſtotle* ſeems wiſe and excellent [*That it is abſurd for any Man to go about to define firſt Principles; becauſe they cannot be defined.*] But ſince the World is extant, and our conſtant beholding of it, and converſe with it, makes it no more a Miracle to us, than we are to our ſelves: and ſince we find that certainty and fixation in the Worlds firſt make, that there is no more ſince made, but a continuance of the World in a natural orderly courſe,

courſe, and ſucceſſion; and that theſe firſt Originals do, by a certain neceſſary Law of their own being and exiſtence, propagate the World, in a way not only obvious to our Senſes, but demonſtratively to our Reaſon; and that ſuch Beings cannot ceaſe to operate as they do, nor cannot operate otherwiſe than they do; we come rightly to call that a *Miracle*, which is neither one of the Worlds original pieces, or firſt Principles, nor any thing that can naturally be deduced from any or all of them, in the regular way of the Worlds exiſting. In anſwering therefore this Objection, I will firſt admit all that can be admitted to the *Atheiſt's* advantage; which is, That whenſoever we ſee any thing come to paſs, that we are not able to give an account how, in a natural and in the ordinary courſe of the World, it ſhould come to paſs: and though we have not ſeen it come to paſs before; yet, in that caſe, if there be a *poſſibility* of a remote and occult cauſe, that we do not at the preſent ſee nor comprehend, there is no abſolute neceſſity to impoſe that as a *Miracle* upon any Man; becauſe he will ſay, 'tis more reaſonable to believe it to come from ſomewhat he doth ſee, (if there be a poſſibility of it,) than to come from what he doth not ſee. But, when

when the caſe falls out to be, that a thing is brought to paſs, to which we are not only unable to aſſign a natural Cauſe, but ſuch a thing as is not poſſible to have a natural Cauſe; which is neceſſarily to be concluded, when it either overthrows the courſe of Nature, and goes directly counter to it, or is evidently above it, and ſuperiour to it) in ſuch a caſe Mankind muſt ſubmit to it as a *Miracle*, and go to ſomewhat ſuperiour to Nature, to find the Cauſe of it. There can never be a natural cauſe aſſigned for *raiſing a Dead Man to Life*; 'tis both above Nature, and againſt Nature. For any Man to be able, in one moment, to ſpeak all Languages, is a thing above Nature, and naturally impoſſible: for we ſee and know, that Men muſt arrive at the knowledge of any Language, by induſtry and uſe, and cannot attain it otherwiſe. In ſuch caſes, as we ſee no viſible natural cauſe for ſuch things, ſo 'tis utterly impoſſible there ſhould be any. If a Man ſhould vaniſh out of our ſight, and in two or three minutes conveyhimſelf a hundred miles off; as we could give no Reaſon for it, ſo our Reaſon aſſures us it were impoſſible any natural Reaſon ever ſhould be given for it. There is no room for any poſſibility of an *occult cauſe*; 'tis, we know, out of all natural

natural compass, and such a thing as all the power of the World can never perform; and must of necessity be brought to pass by a Power superior to it.

For the other Objection the Atheist may make, which is, *To deny that ever there were any such Miracles wrought in the World*: and that the matter of Fact about them is not true. First, I must tell the Atheist, if he will believe nothing but what he sees, nor give credit to any thing that is reported, by former Ages, and delivered down to us, he must confine himself to a very narrow part of the World, and indeed, fall below that due station a rational Creature ought to keep. VVhen-ever my Reason can assure me of a thing, by arriving at a satisfaction about it, such as Reason requires, I ought to be ascertained of it; because *Doubting*, in its *Foundation*, is imperfection, and in its *Operation*, Vexation. The tendency of the rational Soul is against both these. Reason requires no more, in any thing, to satisfie it self withall, than the matter, 'tis conversant with, is capable of affording. 'Twere to deny Reason to be Reason, to say, it required a knowledge of any thing, beyond the nature and extent of it; and should not acquiesce

acquieſce in the utmoſt evidence the ſubject can afford. And therefore, in this preſent caſe of *Miracles*, which are things done and paſt in other ages, a Man, by his Reaſon conſiders; Firſt, 'Tis Poſſible ſuch things *may* have been done; I cannot poſitively, upon any good ground, determine they have *not been done*: becauſe 'tis poſſible (and muſt be ſo granted) that there *may* be a ſupreme Power above and beyond the World, that *may* over-rule the World, as it pleaſes; and that becauſe there is nothing viſible, either in Senſe or Reaſon, that makes it *impoſſible*. *Secondly*, A Man muſt conſider, By what ways and means he may reaſonably be aſſured and ſatisfied, that ſuch things actually were don. To wiſh to *ſee* a thing that is paſt, were childiſh; to call for any *Mathematical Demonſtration* of it, were ridiculous; and both impoſſible. And therefore a Man muſt come to know the fact of things, tranſacted before he was born, and of ſuch as he never ſaw, by the credible Teſtimony of others; aſſiſted, in ſome caſes, with the preſent viſible remaining Effects of the things themſelves; and 'tis not poſſible to know them any other way. The Queſtion therefore, in this caſe, will be, [*Whether* (upon the Credit of others, by a general Teſtimony given

given to it) *we may reasonably believe a thing to have been, which we never saw? and be satisfied of the Truth of that, which we our selves were not eye-witnesses of?*]

For the making of this good, in the affirmative, let these things be considered.

First, Those that were *eye-witnesses*, at the first, of any matter of fact had as much certain assurance of it, as we have of any thing we now see. And therefore their report of it then cannot be false, unless they designed it should be so. For, whatever mistakes they were capable of then, we are still liable to the same now; and whatsoever, upon that account, will invalidate their Testimony, will destroy the grounds of our own Belief for ever. 'Tis no-where necessary here to determine, where the ultimate and supreme Certainty of Mankind lyes, and whence it arises. To attribute so much to the Senses, as *Epicurus* does, is, doubtless, too much to debase that noble part of Man, which is his Reason, and to make way for all imaginable deceit. 'Tis obvious to us how commonly our Senses are mistaken. Should a Man take no other impression of the Sun or the Moon into his understanding, but what he receives from his Senses, he would never know either of them to be above

above *half a yard diameter*: if he did not conſider, that the diſtance of the object deceives his ſight. Experience tells us how eaſie it is (were it not for the help of our Underſtanding,) to repreſent falſe Images, that ſhall perfectly cheat the Senſes. For when by a falſe Light, or any other deceivable way to the Senſes, a thing is repreſented to me to be otherwiſe, than indeed it is; the underſtanding looks beyond the bare Repreſentation, to the Circumſtances wherein the Deceit lyes, and ſo rectifies the Senſes. The Underſtanding often does ſo, and is the ſupreme guide of them. Nor does it ever depart from the information of Senſe, where 'tis ſatisfied there is no *accidental Deceit* put upon the Senſes. In ſuch caſes, the informations of Senſe, and the reſults of right Reaſon, are ever the ſame, becauſe both perfect in their kind. 'Twere a great demonſtration of Imbecillity in the Underſtanding, to deny what we feel and ſee to be, and are ſure there is no deceit put upon us in ſo doing. In this caſe *Ariſtotle* ſayes rightly, *Relinquere Senſum, & ſequi Rationem, debilitas eſt Intellectus.* And the Philoſopher was doubtleſs upon the right way of probation, that when one diſputed with him againſt Motion, roſe up himſelf,

himſelf, and walkt about before him. It ſeems therefore moſt reaſonable to believe, that the utmoſt of all humane Certainty lies in the final reſults of the Underſtanding: which takes in all the aſſiſtance of Senſe, in ſuch things as are objects for both; and never differs from Senſe, when 'tis no way deceived or abuſed; of which the Underſtanding is ſtill the Judge. And in other things ſpeculative, and beyond the compaſs of Senſe, it judges purely and ſingly by it ſelf. The faculty of our Senſes, and that of the Underſtanding are both perfect in their kind. But the Underſtanding is ſuperiour, and rectifies that deceit and miſtake the Senſes are liable to: and, when 'tis ſatisfied, the Senſes are in their true and right exerciſe, and under no deceit, never differs from them; but the Senſes and the Underſtanding alwaies concur: 'Twere to imagine, elſe, that God had made us divided againſt our ſelves.

But ſo far as our preſent matter in hand is concerned, let us take things which way we will; thoſe that were, at the firſt, eye-witneſſes of any thing, and had their Underſtandings about them, were capable of making a Judgment as certain, as Mankind is capable of. And, when very many together agree to witneſs to the fact of a thing

thing they ſaw, it muſt needs give all the cumulative advantage to the Certainty of it that poſſibly we can expect. The Deceit therefore that we can only fear, in the Teſtimony of others, is, an *intention and deſign* they may poſſibly have to deceive and abuſe us, and to miſrepreſent matter of Fact to us. Now that which ought to ſatisfie our minds in this caſe, (becauſe we have as much to our purpoſe as the ſubject matter is capable of, and as our ſatisfaction ought to require) is this: If we find, in any Age, men of all Intereſts and Principles in that Age, though never ſo different in themſelves, all concurring in a matter of Fact; and many who were, in that very Age, led by their Intereſts and Principles, to oppoſe the truth of it, as carrying in it conſequences deſtructive to them; yet ſtill acknowledging that matter of Fact, and juſtifying themſelves againſt the Effects and Products of it, by ſome collateral way, and never by denying the Fact: (which could ariſe from no other reaſon, but becauſe the Fact was a thing ſo palpable, that t e whole Age would have confuted and ſhamed them, in the denial of it) and that the truth of ſuch a matter of Fact hath deſcended to us with the concurrent Teſtimony of all Ages

since: 'tis not any way reasonable to doubt of such a thing. *First*, Here is all the Evidence possible to be had about a thing past. And *Secondly*, Such as ought to make us certain of it; because we must needs judge of other Men that lived then, by our selves and others that live now, and by the constitution and frame of the World; and taking that, which is an infallible *Medium*, in this case, to judge by, 'tis morally impossible such a thing should be a Lye.

And this will appear to be the very case about *Miracles*, and the fact of them. For we have not only such a Testimony about them, as we have that there was such a place as *Rome*, or such a man as *Alexander* or *Cæsar*: (because perhaps no Mans interest ever lay to deny such a thing; but as it would have been generally ridiculous, and presently confuted, so haply it would not have been to any purpose to any one Man, in his own particular, to have attempted such a Negative.) But, in this case, 'twas the interest of many, (where-ever Miracles were wrought to establish a new Religion,) to deny the fact of them; and nothing could have been more easie, nor more sure of success, if there had been really no such thing.

And

And yet we find the Miracles wrought by *Chriſt* [not to mention any of the other Miracles that have been in the World] deſcend to us with the univerſal Teſtimony of that Age: not only of thoſe that were converted by them, and friends to them; but by the greateſt oppoſers of the Religion introduced by them, both of Jews and Heathens. *Joſephus*, a famous and learned Jew, in the 18th Book of his Hiſtory, and *chap.* 14. tells the World this concerning Chriſt; ſayes he, *At that time was* Jeſus, *a wiſe Man, if it be lawful to call him a Man: for he was the performer of divers wonderful Works, and the inſtructor of thoſe who willingly entertain the Truth: and he drew unto him divers Jews and Greeks to be his followers. This was Chriſt, who being accuſed by the Princes of our Nation before* Pilate, *and afterward condemned to the Croſs by him; yet did not thoſe who followed him from the beginning, forbear to love him for the Ignominy of his Death: for he appeared unto them alive the third day after, according as the Divine Prophets had before teſtified the ſame, and divers other wonderful things of him; and from that time forward the race of the Chriſtians, who have derived their name from him, hath never ceaſed.*

Not only *Joſephus*, but the Jews generally were forced to acknowledge the Fact of Chriſt's Miracles; but they tell you he did them not by his own Power, but by ſome Magick Art which he brought out of *Egypt*, or by the vertue of their *Gabbala*.

Tertullian in his Apology, *ch.* 21. ſpeaking of thoſe miraculous paſſages that happned at the Death of Chriſt; ſayes he to the Heathen *Romans*; *Theſe things cannot be ſuſpected, ſeeing your own Calendars have remarked them, and your ſelves retain the teſtimony thereof in your own Regiſters*: And a little after, (ſpeaking of the Miracles of Chriſt,) ſayes he, *Pilate wrote all this Hiſtory to the Emperour* Tiberius; *whereupon the Cæſars themſelvs had worſhipped our Maſter, if their Government in ſo doing, had been conſiſtent with the Men of this World, and Chriſtians permitted to have been ſaluted Cæſars.* There is nothing more plain in Hiſtory, than that under the *Roman* ſtate, the ſeveral Lieutenants of their Provinces did ſend conſtant Regiſters of their Acts and of all the moſt material Paſſages that happened, to the Emperours; and ſo *Pontius Pilate* ſent a Regiſter of his, to the Emperour *Tiberius*, wherein he gave an account of Chriſt, and his Miracles: this is alſo clear and evident from *Juſtin Martyrs* ſecond Apology

logy for the Chriſtians to the Emperour *Antoninus*, wherein, endeavouring him to perſwade him to believe the Miracles of Chriſt, he ſhews him how they were of old foretold by the Prophets; and to convince him they actually were, he refers him to the Acts of *Pontius Pilate*, then regiſtred at *Rome*. And *Tertullian* again in the firſt Chapter of his Apology, tells us plainly, that the account that came out of *Paleſtine* of Chriſt's Miracles, was ſo powerful at *Rome*, and made ſuch impreſſions there, that the Emperour moved the Senate earneſtly to embrace that Religion, who gave no other reaſon for their refuſal of it, but that they had not themſelves, before it was propoſed to them, approved of it: and for a while the Emperour perſiſted in his Opinion, threatning puniſhment to the accuſers of Chriſtians.

Celſus the great ſtickler againſt the Chriſtian Religion, confeſſeth the fact of Chriſt's Miracles, as may be ſeen in *Origen's* ſeventh Book againſt him; only he does as the *Jews* did, father them upon the power of the Devil: to which *Origen* largely replies, *If the Devil do at any time counterfeit Miracles*, ſaith he, from the impoſtures and counterfeits, we may infer, that there

are *true Miracles wrought by a divine Power.* But in this case, if ever there were a Miracle wrought [let it be fathered upon what Men please] they cannot deny but that there is a Power supreme to the World, and that must produce such a Miracle; and there needs no better acknowledgement than that, to lead Men directly to God.

But suppose we had no other account of these Miracles, but from the Christians themselves that then lived; and such whose interest it was to defend them; who can imagine that Men should tell a notorious lye in the face of that very Age, when it was in the power of every Man to contradict it? and that it should universally pass without controul? is it a thing credible, that the Christians then, should chiefly insist and justifie themselves upon a matter of Fact that was false, and that every-body might then know to be so? it had been a readier way to have brought ruine and destruction upon them, than have proved a means to gain them favour and protection. If we consult the several *Apologies* [the first of which was *Justin Martyr's*] the Christians then made for themselves, upon several occasions to the Emperours, and to the Senat; we shall find

one

one of the chiefeſt foundations they bottomed the Chriſtian Religion upon, and their own juſtification in the profeſſion of it, was the Miracles that were openly and viſibly wrought for the firſt ſettlement, and after-confirmation of it in the World: And the effect of ſuch Apologies, as *Euſebius* and other Eccleſiaſtical Writers plentifully inform us, was, that the Chriſtians very often obtained favour, and thereby procured reſt and eaſe to themſelves, from their ſore and grievous Perſecutions. Now 'tis not to be imagined, but that if the Fact of ſuch Miracles had been falſe, and the Chriſtians had made ſuch a lye their refuge, their Enemies would have been thereby rather inraged than appeaſed; and it would certainly have haſtened their ruine, rather than have procured their Liberty.

But methinks that which ought abundantly to ſatisfie any reaſonable Man of this Truth, that there were Miracles wrought in thoſe Primitive Times of the Goſpel, is, That we not onely find the Chriſtian Writers in that Age *unâ voce*, proving the Miracles of Chriſt to the Heathens, by Teſtimonies from amongſt themſelves, and their own acknowledged

Records, and the consent of the whole Age, both Friends and Foes, wherein they were wrought to the truth of them, as hath been shewed; but also we find them loudly crying out to the Heathens, that if any doubted of the Miracles wrought by Christ and the Apostles, if they would come amongst the Christians, they would then shew them actually and visibly, Miracles wrought before their own Eyes, by the Power of Christ every day: that is worth consideration, with what wonderful and general triumph they defend their Religion, and oppose the Heathens with this Challenge; and with an offer to convince them by their own eye-sight of the Miracles that were frequently wrought amongst them.

Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with *Tryphon* the *Jew*, speaks very largely and fully about this matter, and tells him, *We that believe in Jesus Christ, crucified under* Pontius Pilate, *adjure all Devils and unclean Spirits, and have them obedient to us. You may know that Jesus died, rose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, by that which is done in your sight by his Power; for the Devils tremble at his Name: and being adjured thereby, are overcome:* with much more to the same purpose; professing the Miracles that

that were every day wrought in the ſight and view of all Men. *Irenæus* in his Book *adverſus Hæreſes, lib. 2. chap. 36.* ſpeaking of Miracles then wrought by the Name and Power of Chriſt, hath theſe words; *Wherefore in his Name, they who are truly his Diſciples, receiving Grace from him, are inabled to benefit the reſt of Men: for ſome caſt out Devils moſt really and truely, ſo that they who are cleanſed from thoſe unclean Spirits, do often believe themſelves, and are in the Church: ſome have the knowledge of things to come, Viſions and prophetical Readings; and others by the impoſition of Hands cure thoſe that are ſick of any infirmity, and reſtore them perfectly whole. And even now, as we have ſaid, both the Dead have riſen, and many years have remained with us.*

Origen in his Book againſt *Celſus*, cries out of him, *If thou wilt not believe other Miracles yet believe what thou ſeeſt now; for 'tis the magnificent work of Jeſus, to heal even to this day in the name of Jeſus whom God pleaſeth.*

Tertullian is ſo plain and poſitive in this matter, that in his famous Apology for the Chriſtians before-mentioned, he tells the *Roman* Senators, that if they pleaſed to try the truth of that Miraculous Power that was then in the Church, they would ſee it

it openly exerciſed when they pleaſed before their own Tribunals, in the 23 *chap.* of his Apology.

'Tis wholly incredible to believe the World ſhould be univerſally deceived in theſe things; and that no-body [no not ſuch who were highly concerned to do it, and engaged by a contrary Religion, to overthrow a Religion chiefly eſtabliſhed and upheld by ſuch Miracles] ſhould contradict the Fact of them, and diſcover the Cheat, if they were meerly fictitious. There ſeems to be a kind of Infallibility in this circumſtanced Teſtimony about a bare matter of Fact. For, whether ſuch a thing were done or no, or whether there was ſuch a Man, or ſuch a Place or no, is not capable of any defilement by conveyance. 'Tis not like a *Story*, which is capable of all kind of Alterations, Additions and Diminutions: but 'tis ſuch a thing, as muſt be either an intire poſitive Truth, or an intire Falſhood. If any Man in this Age ſhould pretend to work a *Miracle*, it would be the buſineſs of almoſt every Man to diſcover the Truth of it: and if he were found an Impoſtor, and that truly and really there was no ſuch thing, how many would ſtrive to proclaim the Cheat firſt: and the Teſtimony of the whole

whole Age would be his Executioner. Nor have we only this moral Certainty of the fact of theſe Miracles; but the concurrence of that *important occaſion*, upon the account of which they were wrought; and very good reaſon to think they ſhould be wrought upon by it; which was, the ſetling of the *Chriſtian Religion* in the World: To put an end not only to *Gentiliſm*, and all *Heatheniſh* Worſhip; but to determine that Eccleſiaſtical Policy of the *Jews*, which had been, by the like extraordinary Miracles, before ſettled in the World. And that ſuch a thing as the Chriſtian Religion was then introduced, we have not only the ſame general concurring Teſtimony; but alſo we our ſelves, at this time, ſee the Effects, Products, and Continuance of it, daily before our Eyes; which is the utmoſt Evidence we can poſſibly have of any thing tranſacted and paſſed heretofore.

Secondly, He that upon no terms will admit us to be *morally certain* of any matter of Fact, by the Teſtimony of the Age when it was done, (for if ever he will admit it, he muſt in this Caſe, where all things concur;) he muſt (with great abſurdity, and without the leaſt colour of Reaſon, or certain knowledge of his own,

to

to contradict it,) put the *Fool* and the *Lye* upon all Men of all ſorts in an Age: and of neceſſity, render them ſo *fooliſhly weak*, as not to be able to judge whether a thing be done or not done; or elſe ſo *maliciouſly falſe* to all Mankind, as to agree together to convey a *Lye* down to them, and impoſe an eminent Cheat upon them. This, as it is in the reaſon of the thing, abſurd to think, (when there is no viſible Reaſon why they ſhould do ſo, and many apparent Reaſons why they ſhould not do ſo) ſo our experience tells us, That there was never yet any ſuch thing done in the World. There never was an offer made to Cheat the World with a matter of Fact, but, in that very Age, 'twas diſcovered and made appear: and (together with the ſtory of the Cheat) that diſcovery of it likewiſe ſo to be, hath been conveyed to all future times. There have been but three Religions in the World, that ever pretended to a Syſteme of ſupernatural Revelation: which are, the *Jewiſh Religion*, the *Chriſtian Religion*, and the *Mahumetan Religion*. The matters of fact of both the former, have had all the concurrence of humane Teſtimony: and no man can ſhew, that in the Ages, wherein they were tranſact[illegible], they were ever denyed

denyed by any. The laſt, which is the *Mahumetan* Religion, was openly diſcovered in that Age, to be a *Cheat*: and the World is as well aſſured of *Mahomets* being an Impoſtor, as they are of the Religion he framed; and that by the teſtimony of the Age wherein he lived. Does not the ſtory of that Age tell us, how he began his Religion? What advantage he took by the diſeaſe he had of the *Falling-ſickneſs*, to tell men whenever he was in a *Fit*, that he was in a *Rapture*, and *converſed with the Angel Gabriel?* How one *Sergius* of *Alexandria* (an Apoſtate and diſcontented Monk) coming to him, perſwaded him to form the *Alchoran*, by adding ſuch matters, out of the Old and New Teſtaments, to his own devices, as might bring in *Gentiles*, *Jews* and *Chriſtians* to his Religion? The ſtory of that Age aſſures us fully of the whole *Cheat* of his Life; and of his Promiſe at his Death, (in ſome imitation, no doubt, of Chriſt) to riſe again within *four Daies*. In which time he became putrified and noiſome, and his Diſciples, at laſt, forced to bury him. The wiſeſt and beſt men, at that very time, oppoſed him and made his Drunkenneſs, and horrible Debauchery notorious and evident. Whoever conſults

ſults the Principles of his Religion, will plainly enough perceive, the deſign was to ſet up himſelf, and engage all Parties to him. The *Alchoran* is, by ſome, rightly abridged into theſe eight Principles. 1. *Every one ought to believe that God is a great God, and Mahomet is his Prophet*, Abraham *the friend of God*, Moſes *the Meſſenger of God, and Chriſt the Breath of God; of whom the Virgin* Mary *grew with Child by ſmelling a Roſe, and was deliver'd of him at her breaſts.* 2. *Every Man ought to marry to encreaſe the Sectaries of* Mahomet. 3. *Every Man muſt give of his wealth to the poor.* 4. *Every Man muſt make his prayers five times a day.* 5. *Every Man muſt keep a Lent one month in a year.* 6. *Muſt be obedient to his Parents.* 7. *Thou ſhalt not Kill.* *And* 8. *Do unto others as thou wouldeſt be done unto thy ſelf.* 'Tis not hard to perceive, whence this counterfeit-Coin was fetcht; and where the legitimate and original ſtamp is to be found. He would induce the good of all *Religions*, ſo he might be the chief Prophet. The whole buſineſs then of *Mahomet* was a grand notorious Cheat. And though it has poſſeſſed ſo much of the World ſince, yet we have abundant aſſurance from the Teſtimony of the ſame Age wherein he lived, that it was ſo, and the particulars of it exactly handed down to us.

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We are able to trace all falſe Religions and pretended Deities to their Original. The World is filled with a ſufficient Account of the Deceit and Fabulouſneſs of them all. To give one clear Inſtance of it: *Saturn* was the moſt ancient God the Heathens had amongſt them; *Tertullian* ſays this of him: *You have* (ſays he, ſpeaking to the *Romans*) *no God more ancient than* Saturn: *yet* Diodorus Siculus, Tullus, Craſſus, Severus, Cornelius Nepos, *nor any other Hiſtorian, ever ſpake of him otherwiſe than a Man. If we ſeek for proofs drawn out of publick Records and Monuments, we cannot meet with faithfuller or more certain, than here in* Italy *it ſelf: where we learn that* Saturn, *after many Voyages, landed in this Province, while he was coming from* Greece; *and was received by one* Janus. *The Mountain where he dwelt, was called* Saturnien: *The City he founded carries even until now the ſame appellation. It was he who firſt found out the invention of Tables, and ſigning or making money with the image of Princes: from whence it comes, that the publick treaſure is placed by you in his Temple. Now if* Saturn *were a Man, he was the Son of another Man: and being his Father was a Man, you cannot ſay, He was the Son of Heaven and Earth. But* Saturn, *in perſon, ſurprizing the Inhabitants*

of

of ſeveral places, where he landed; and they not knowing whence he came, paſſed after for a divine Perſon, and a God. Tertul. Apol. chap. 8. In the ſame manner, in his ninth Chapter, he ſhews them the original of *Jupiter, Bacchus, Ceres, Minerva,* and the reſt of their Gods: and how they came firſt to be ſo accounted: and tells them, [*if* Bacchus *were therefore made a God with them, becauſe he firſt taught them to plant Vines, they uſed* Lucullus *ill, in not making him a God too, who firſt planted Cherry-trees in* Italy, *and brought them from the Kingdom of* Pontus.] So clear and full account have we of all thoſe things; and ſo little reaſon has any man to be deceived with thoſe things; nor can he be deceived with them, unleſs he have a mind ſo to be.

'Tis to be ſuppoſed, that in matters *diſputable*, 'tis much more eaſie to deceive Men that are weak and ignorant, by impoſing upon them, than in any bare matter of Fact; wherein every Man, even the meaneſt, may confute a falſhood; there the World can never come to be impoſed upon. If all the cunningeſt Men in this Age ſhould contrive to let Poſterity know, that *London was never burnt, but ſtands juſt as it did twenty years ago*; 'Twere not in their power to make Poſterity ſwallow down ſuch a falſe-

hood,

hood, by perſwading this Age univerſally, without any contradiction, to convey it as a Truth down to them.

Thirdly, To deny all kind of Certainty from moral Teſtimony, is, to deny our ſelves the benefit of any part of the World, or of any thing done in any part of the World, at any time in the World; but juſt what we our *ſelves ſaw* in the times and places wherein we lived. No one Age can be of any uſe to another, in any Record of it; nor any one Man of uſe to another, by his Credit, in ſuch a way. For the ſame reaſon, that will make a Man not to believe others, will be as good to them, not to believe him: and ſo all Mankind muſt *live upon their eye-ſight*; and he that wants that, muſt neceſſarily be a perfect *Sceptick*. This does not only deſtroy all confidence in preſent Society, (becauſe, if I cannot reſt aſſured of what all men generally, in an Age paſt, have affirm'd, and no Man has contradicted in that Age, nor ſince; I can much leſs be aſſured of what any number of Men ſhall tell me now, when I do not know, but that it may be contradicted by ſome that know otherwiſe, before this Age paſs over.) But it does alſo interrupt the ſatisfaction that all Men have about *themſelves* and their own Relations. For, what have we but a moral Aſſurance

from a concurring Testimony, with the visible effects of it, that such a Man is my Father; or such a Woman my Mother; or such persons my Relations; or that such a Country is my native Country? All Men generally rest satisfied, and credit humane Testimony with concurring effects, as they have good Reason about such things; and yet there may possibly be deceits here; and a good account given, both how, and why they may be so. But because they are so rare and unusual, and also *so improbable*, they do not at all disturb the general satisfaction Mankind has about those things. But when a whole Age agrees to assure us, by their Testimony of a matter of Fact they saw, and were Eye-witnesses of; there can be no Reason assigned of a deceit or mistake in them, further than what all Men are liable to, in the truest exercises of their Senses, and their Reason, in their then judging of it, nor in their conveying of it to us; because 'tis not to be conceived, but that if any falshood, in any Age, had been made publick, many (at least those whose interest it was to do it,) would have openly discovered and contradicted it. And to think a whole Age (Men of all sorts and parties, some against their own Interest, and others to no purpose at all) should agree to

abuse

abuſe poſterity with an abſolute untruth, is a thing beyond the compaſs of all humane credit.

Fourthly, He that will deny that a Man (by the exerciſe of his Reaſon, in comparing things together, and judging of moral circumſtances,) can arrive at ſuch an aſſurance as may and ought to ſatisfie a rational Man, about things which he never ſaw; he muſt deny one of the nobleſt, and moſt uſeful effects of the rational Soul; which is, *by rational inquiries and concluſions, to aſcertain it ſelf of things, that can no way be the Object of Senſe.* No Man ever came to know, the World is round by ſenſible Experience: nor to foretel an Eclipſe of the Sun, before it came to paſs. Such things are ſingly the deductions of Reaſon, without any aſſiſtance of Senſe. If no certain concluſion can be made from any humane Teſtimony however circumſtanced, no Government nor Laws can be fixed beyond an Age. For if Men give no credit to any thing but what they ſee, every Age muſt either undo or do over again, whatever the precedent Age did. Nor can Men ever come to oblige their Succeſſors; becauſe the validity of that Obligation muſt needs

depend upon the credit of a humane Conveyance. The *Atheiſt* therefore is moſt abſurd in his Negative about this matter: the truth of which ought to be eſtabliſhed, not only upon the preſent point, to prove That there is a God, by the truth of the Miracles which none but God could work; but alſo for the great Advantage we have by it, in aſſuring us of the fact of ſupernatural Revelations. Which, beſides all the Divine Evidence they have peculiar to themſelves, have alſo ſuch a *credible Teſtimony* accompanying them, as, upon that account, makes them deſcend beyond the preſent Age wherein they were firſt delivered; and with apparent reaſon to reach us now, as well as thoſe who were the eye-witneſſes of them at firſt.

A fifth Argument to prove, againſt an Atheiſt, that God made the World, is this; *That the preſent frame and poſture of the World is ſuch, that the notion of a Deity, and a Power above the World is of abſolute neceſſity to the upholding of it.* The Atheiſt, in denying the Being of God, denies the well-being; yea, deſtroys the being of the World it ſelf. Though he can conſiſt without the World, yet the World cannot ſubſiſt without him. Were there no power above the World,

World, to influence it, (the ſenſe of which did reſtrain and oblige men) we ſhould ſoon experiment what the World would come to. For the making this Truth more evident, let us but imagine a *whole Country of Atheiſts*, that believed nothing above nor beyond this World: and believed themſelves (as they muſt needs) to be the top of the World, that owed no ſubjection to any thing; and then take a view of thoſe Conſequences which muſt neceſſarily attend ſuch an *Atheiſtical Crowd*, and by that we ſhall clearly diſcern, of what abſolute neceſſity the acknowledgment of God is to the ſupport of the World.

Firſt, There *could never come to be ſuch a thing as a ſenſe of good and evil amongſt them.* That's inconſiſtent with Atheiſm. The diſtinction of Good and Evil, is a Principle within us relating to ſomething above us. The notion of that once taken away, the diſtinction of Good and Evil muſt needs expire: and the Supreme ruling Principle of every Man can be no other but the *pleaſing himſelf*, and doing whatſoever his own inclination dictates to him. Suppoſe Men naturally lawleſs, and without any reſtraint within them, and you can never imagine them to come under any Law, but their own unruly appetite: and ſo, the whole of ſuch a

company must be inslaved to the Will one of another, and to each individual Mans Will, so far as he has power to accomplish it. 'Tis the distinction between Good and Evil, that keeps the World from being a heap of rubbish and confusion. And no such distinction can ever be supposed to have its rise from a Man himself, unless he had a superiour, and were made with such a distinguishing Principle. And that for these Reasons.

First, Good and Evil can never be inherent in Men, if there be no God, because it has nothing it can refer to. A distinction of Good and Evil in a Man does necessarily relate to a perfect and supreme Good, as a Rule by which 'tis to be tryed. We cannot conceive how the notion of Good and Evil should ever have existed in the minds of Men, if there had not been an Eternal and Supreme Rectitude. Had there not been a Being Infinitely and Originally Good, the denomination of Good could never have been in the World: nor could we any other way, ever have known what had been meant by that we call Evil. There must needs have been a Supreme standard of these things: and in this matter of Good and Evil 'tis an infinite *Rectum, that is index sui & obliqui.*

Secondly,

Secondly, Becauſe the diſtinction of Good and Evil in Men is a thing perfectly relating to Reward and Puniſhment; which none can be the ultimate diſpenſer of to himſelf: becauſe no Man can be imagined to do any thing againſt himſelf, when he is a Law to himſelf; nor to condemn any thing in himſelf as Evil, when he is Supreme. Nor, on the other hand, is it proper to ſay, *a man can reward himſelf*; becauſe he can add nothing to himſelf. All Reward is an expectation beyond our ſelves. When we ſay an Action carries its own Reward, 'tis becauſe of the ſatisfaction it gives us in hope of a Reward from Above.

Thirdly, If a Man be ſo ſupreme (as the Atheiſt will make him) to have nothing at all above him, there can never be poſſibly made by Him any diſtinction in his Actions: becauſe he would be then under no Law but himſelf; and ſo could never come to break any Law by himſelf. He that is his own Law, can never come under any Tranſgreſſion: nor can ſuch a thing as Evil ever happen to be in an Independent Being. No Man can ever come to ſay, he does ill, without he be under the Law of a Superiour. By theſe things, 'tis plain, if there be no God, there can

be no ſuch thing as a diſtinction of Good and Evil amongſt Men: and without that, 'tis obvious into what dirt and meanneſs the whole World will crumble. There can be no ſuch thing as Juſt and Unjuſt; no ſuch thing as Property; no ſuch thing as Right in *meum & tuum*. For all theſe things, and every other thing that is either decent or uſeful, is graffed upon that diſtinguiſhing taſte of Good and Evil, God has, by our *firſt make*, indued us withal: ſo that, without that, no Man can pretend Right to his Life or Eſtate, when another, that is a perfect Law to himſelf, has an opportunity and a will to take it away.

A ſecond Conſequence attending a company of Atheiſts without a God in their thoughts, is this; *They could never come to be ſecured one to another in ſuch a way, as is abſolutely neceſſary to uphold the frame of the World, and to keep Men ſafe in ſociety and converſe together.* If there were no ground for any Truſt among Mankind, nor any way to create ſuch a ſecurity amongſt Men, as that they might be reaſonably aſcertained one to another; it were not poſſible they ſhould ever come into any *political Aſſociation*, or live in a moral converſe quietly together; but muſt perpetually abide in a ſtate of War, and ſtill recur to open force.

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The World it ſelf is ſo framed, that Men cannot live and converſe together, without putting *ſome truſt* each in other. All the matters of the World cannot be made ſure. *Truſt* is the firſt and chief ground of all humane Converſe. Without that, each Man, when he met another, would ſuppoſe he met his Enemy; and think himſelf ſafe in nothing, but the power of his own Defence. Now the great and only foundation, upon which all *truſt* amongſt Mankind is erected, is a general acknowledgment of a Supreme Power above them, that perfectly knows their Actions, and has power to Reward and Puniſh them: and a Principle in Men, which we call Conſcience, that ſteers them with ſuch an apprehenſion. If there be nothing *above Men* to puniſh them, of which they ſtand in awe, nor any innate Principle *within them*, to determine their own Actions about Good and Evil, it were abſurd and fooliſh ever to truſt any Man: becauſe there could be no viſible ground for ſuch a Truſt. An *Atheiſt*, that ſays, There is no God above him, nor any Conſcience within him, muſt needs make himſelf his *own Law*; and, by that, makes himſelf incapable of any Truſt from another: For the great reaſon of Truſt lies in Mens acknowledging Principles, that will bring them to deny

deny their own Intereſt, when Juſtice and Truth calls for it. The acknowledgment of God, and the exerciſes of Conſcience, give Men a ground of ſecurity one in another: that when Mens private Intereſts oppoſe their doing what is juſt, and there is no power to force them; yet the Fear of God, and the excitements of Conſcience may over-rule them. 'Tis not to be doubted, but that the general Awe of a God in the World, is the *inviſible Guard of it*; and that grand Pillar by which the World is upheld, and made to conſiſt within it ſelf. Upon the *Atheiſts* Principles, all the foundations of Truſt and Security are taken away. There can be no ſuch thing as an Oath, no ſuch thing as a Promiſe, nor a ground for any ſort of Engagements, where there is no God: for in all thoſe caſes Men appeal from themſelves to the Judgment of God. Who will ever truſt another, when he is his own Law, and can offend none but himſelf? Nay, can never offend himſelf? For where a Man is *Supreme*, and is a Law to himſelf, he can never come to do any thing but *what is right*. Amongſt pure Atheiſts there cannot be any ſort of Confidence created. And that Confidence Mankind put one in another is the very Original and Cement of all Government, all Relations,

lations, all Trade, and all other converſe of Men together. Take away God and Conſcience once out of the World, and no man can be obliged to do, nor ever will do, any thing but juſt what he pleaſeth. 'Twere a fond thing to think any man ſhould; becauſe there is not the leaſt reaſon why he ſhould. And in that caſe, no Man would ever truſt to any Engagements from another, becauſe there could be *nothing obligatory* in the making of them, and ſo not the leaſt reaſon for the keeping of them; unleſs you will admit of a Supream Power above Men, to whoſe Judgment and Determination they all refer, and acknowledg themſelves ſubjected; 'tis not poſſible to frame any ground, upon which Mankind ſhould be ever obliged one to another.

Thirdly, *There could never poſſibly be any Government ſetled amongſt Atheiſts*; which is the great Diſtinguiſher of *Men* in their Societies, from *Beaſts* in their Herds. Nay, without Government, Men would be worſe than Beaſts one to another, by how much the more Knowledg and Invention they are poſſeſſed with to do miſchief. Without Government, all Men live in a ſtate of War. Every man has a right to what he can get, and no right to any thing that he cannot keep. One ſayes truly, *That Force*

Force and Fraud muſt needs be the two Cardinal vertues of ſuch a condition. There never can be any Government ſettled amongſt ſuch Men, who overthrow the great and Supreme Rule over the World. Remove God once out of Heaven, and there never will be any Gods upon Earth. Mankind would never agree to ſubject themſelves to Government, but that there is ſomewhat of the *Image of God* in it, to whom they pay a natural homage. Theſe things following make it evident, there can never be any Government ſetled amongſt meer Atheiſts. *Firſt*, By their Principles, the end of Government is extinguiſhed. For the end of Government (as *Ariſtotle*, in his *Politicks*, well deſcribes it) is *reward and puniſhment*. But where there is no acknowledgment of a God, there can be no ſuch thing as Good and Evil: and where there is not a diſtinction of Good and Evil, there can be no place for Reward and Puniſhment. For, being a *terror to Evil-doers*, and *an encouragement to them that do well* (the great hinge upon which all Government hangs) are thoſe Principles God has, by natural light, placed in Men, to direct them how 'tis to be exerciſed and exerted. *Secondly*, By the Atheiſts Tenets, that which ſhould chiefly uphold and ſupport the being

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of Government in the World, is razed and demoliſhed: and that is, a *primary ſubjection to God*, which begets a *ſecondary ſubjection to Men*, as repreſenting him, and exerciſing his Authority among them. He that thinks himſelf his *own God*, will be ſure to be his *own King*. If there be nothing above the World, *Man*, I am ſure, is the Supremeſt part of the World: and ſo muſt needs come to think himſelf an abſolute and independent Being. And he that is ſo, can never make a diſtinction in any Action, nor never ſubject himſelf to any Perſon: becauſe he is his own Law; and that Supremacy, which the *Magiſtrate* ſhould exerciſe, every Atheiſt carries in his own Breaſt. *Thirdly*, There can be no ground for Superiority and Inferiority, nor any ſecurity given between Men, that ſhould create ſuch a Relation amongſt them. No ground at all, I ſay, for it; for, Men that are lawleſs (which all Men muſt needs be ſuppoſed to be, if they have nothing above them) can never come to be governed. This the Atheiſt tacitly confeſſeth, when he tells us, That *Men invented the ſtory of the Gods, and frighted Men therewith, that they might keep the World in ſubjection, and bring Men under Obedience to Government.* It could never enter into Mens minds to ſubject themſelves, if they

they thought themſelves ſupreme in their being, and had no Law but their own Wills. If Mans Nature had not ſomewhat of ſubjection in it to a Supreme Being above him, and inherent Principles obliging him how to behave himſelf toward God, and toward the reſt of the World, Government could never have been introduced, nor thought of. Nor can there be the leaſt mutual ſecurity between Governours and governed, where no God is admitted. For, as I proved before, 'tis an acknowledging of God, in his Supreme Judgment over the World, that is the ground of an Oath, and upon which, the validity of all humane engagements depends. All People in the World, have ſome God or other, by whom they put a ſanction upon all their ſolemn Engagements one to another: and wherein they acquieſce as the higheſt ſecurity Mankind is capable of. And although Men are ſometimes ſo vile as to break them, yet they thereby render themſelves liable to all the Hatred, Reproach and Contempt imaginable: and declare themſelves the publick Enemies both of God and Man. And very often God makes them in this World the viſible Objects of his Juſtice and Diſpleaſure.

But ſuppoſe the Atheiſt object againſt this;

this; and ſay, *'Tis poſſible for Men that deny there is a God, or any ſuch thing as a diſtinction between Good and Evil, for their intereſt's ſake, to erect a Government over them, and ſubmit themſelves to it.*

I anſwer, that admit the intereſt of an Atheiſt ſhould incline him to Government, yet his Principles are deſtructive to it, and make it impoſſible to be attained. For, *Firſt*, There can be no rules for Government in ſuch a caſe, neither how any Man ſhall Govern, nor how any Man ſhall Obey. For where there are no Principles, neither by Supernatural Revelation from God, nor by the Light of Nature in Men, to declare the Ends and Uſes of Government, (as in this Caſe, amongſt avowed Atheiſts who ſay there is no God, there can be none;) there can be nothing but abſolute Will and Pleaſure: which can never come to be exerciſed, but where there is the greateſt Strength. For if one Mans Will be as perfect and as abſolute as anothers, he will never ſubmit to the Will of another, but when he is forced to it. And let us but imagine what a thing Sovereign Power would be in the Hands of Men, where no God is owned, nor any diſtinction of Good and Evil acknowledged: it would neceſſarily induce a Slavery and Subjecti-

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on far worſe than what any one Beaſt is at any time into another. The truth is, that where there are no Rules or Principles, to make a diſtinction between Men, and to be a ground of Superiority and Inferiority, 'tis not poſſible either to erect or to uphold ſuch a kind a conſtitution as Government, any other way than by downright force.

And laſtly, 'Tis not poſſible to be imagined, that the grand fundamental of all Government (which is, that all private peſonal Intereſts ſhould voluntarily yield to the good of the whole) ſhould ever come to be eſtabliſhed among a company of perfect Atheiſts. 'Tis not to be imagined, that where a Man is Supreme in himſelf, and has no Principle but himſelf, that ever he ſhould conſent, in any caſe, to deny himſelf, to his own apparent prejudice. There can be no Reaſon thought of, why he ſhould do it, but for intereſt and advantage: for he can have no other thing to be guided by. And *bare Intereſt* will never teach any Man *actual ſelf-denial*, either for the Good of another, or for the Good of the whole. No Man (without ſome Conſcience of obeying thoſe that are over him, and without ſome natural conviction, that 'tis his Duty to prefer the whole of others before himſelf) will

will ever depart from his own particular intereſt, upon any Notion of the Publick whatſoever. Abſtract God, and Conſcience of well and ill-doing from Men, and no Man's Reaſon but will make himſelf his ſupream Law; and deny him to do any thing againſt himſelf, upon any collateral ground whatever. Yielding, in a man's own particular, to the good of the whole, is a noble beam of natural light ſpringing from God; and from that Conſcience of Good and Ill Men bring into the World with them, in reference to their duty toward others, and the reſt of the World. God deſigned Man in his *make* for a ſociable creature, and that Men ſhould live quietly together; and that, in order to it, they ſhould carry about them natural Obligations one to another. But no Man that has himſelf for his higheſt Principle, (which every Atheiſt muſt have) will ever prefer the Good of any, or of all Men, before his own. So that the Atheiſt, in denying the Being of God, deſtroys neceſſarily all thoſe Principles which purely relate to his Being: And by that deſtroys all thoſe Principles, by which the World is upheld and maintain'd.

Theſe things ſeem with undeniable evidence to enlighten us in our way to God:

and to ſhew us, what a *dark Chaos of nonſenſe and confuſion* the whole of an Atheiſts Principles appears to the eye of our Reaſon. Which way ever we look, whether to the riſe and beginning of the World, to the matter and parts of it, the preſent continuance of it, either to the Being or well-Being of it, we ſtill find our Reaſon leading us ſafely to God. We find how neceſſary the acknowledgment of his Being is to our own, and to ſecure the political frame and compoſition of the World. *Cicero* in his firſt Book *De nat. Deor.* ſpeakes largely and excellently upon this ſubject. *Take away* (ſays he) *the Being and Providence of God out of the World, and there follows nothing but confuſion: not only Piety and Sanctity is gone; but all Faith, Vertue, and humane Societies too.* And of the ſame mind were *Plato* and *Plutarch*, who have largely diſcourſed this way. . Nothing then can more endanger a State, than the encreaſe of Atheiſm; nor can any thing prove more deſtructive to all humane Converſe and Society, and whatſoever relates both to the being and well-being of the World. The Atheiſt, as he is the greateſt *Traitor* to the higheſt King above, ſo his Principles carry in them the moſt dangerous and deſtructive Treaſon to all his *Vicegerents* here below.

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The great Objection the Atheiſt continually makes againſt the whole of Religion is this; ſays he, *No Man ever ſaw the God you talk of; all diſcourſes about ſuch an Infinite Being as you talk of, are meer Fables and Stories, Fantaſms in Mens brains; nor can you diſtinctly conceive any thing of him. 'Tis more ſuitable to Reaſon a great deal to believe only what I ſee, than to offer my ſelf to be poſſeſſed with a belief of what I never ſaw.*

This that the Atheiſt boaſts of as his chief ſupport, he will find to fail him, and render him both groſly *diſingenuous*, and palpably *unreaſonable*. Firſt, *diſingenuous* and falſe to himſelf; for the Atheiſt himſelf, upon his own Principles, is forced to confeſs, *he believes things he never ſaw*; and cannot himſelf deny it. Take the *Epicurean Atheiſt*; did he ever, I wonder, ſee the *Atoms* he tells us of? *Lucretius*, and all the *Atomiſts* confeſs, that the buſineſs of *Atoms* is a thing that does not fall under the perception of Senſe. Did he ever view their *Motion*, by which they cauſed the World? Did he ever take a view of that *vacuum*, that *ultra-mundan ſpace*, where theſe

Atoms are treaſured up? Did either of their great Maſters, *Democritus* or *Epicurus*, ever aſſure the World that they *ſaw* theſe things? or were *eye-witneſſes* to what they would have others believe? Or, was any Man ever yet heard of that did ſee them? Was there ever any ſuch Tradition in the World, that they were ſeen? Take the other Sect of *Atheiſts*, that would have the World to be *eternal*, juſt as it is: and let them be asked, Can they have any *ocular* certainty of the Worlds Eternity? can they know any thing that way in the Age paſt before them? much leſs what was Eternal? Is not the *Worlds being Eternal*, as much a deduction from bare diſcourſe and reaſoning, as that *there is a Supream Being?* If the Atheiſt reſolve to believe nothing but what he *ſees*, unleſs the World were made over and over, no Man can ever believe it, but thoſe that juſt ſaw it made. Take all the Sectators of Atheiſm together, and let me ask them this queſtion: Whether they can refuſe to believe (without offering violence to their Faculties) that there is a principle of Motion in themſelves, and many other parts of the World? And yet I am ſure, they never *ſaw* it. Let any Man tell me, Whether ever he ſaw that Principle that acts himſelf?

ſelf? call it the Soul, or what you will. Did he ever yet *ſee* his own thoughts? And yet we are not more ſure of any one thing in this World, than that we *think*: and without that, we could never come to be ſure of any thing. God has left us the nobleſt part of our ſelves *inviſible*: (which yet we cannot refuſe to believe, unleſs we ceaſe the exerciſe of our own Faculties) that ſo we might have apparent Reaſon not to deny his Being, only becauſe we do not *ocularly* behold him. The nobleſt and moſt peculiar part of Reaſon, is, to come to aſſurance of ſuch things as we do not ſee. There are a thouſand Propoſitions a Man may make ſure to himſelf by his Reaſon, which have no way been the object of Senſe. All the converſe we have with things paſt, and things future, depends ſingly upon the exerciſe of Reaſon: for there Senſe cannot help us. If the Atheiſt will ſee every thing he believes, he muſt never believe any *Sound*, nor any *Smell*. And (as one ſayes well) there is as much Reaſon to deny that to be *ſenſible*, which is the Object but of one Senſe, as to deny that to *be*, whoſe Exiſtence is only the Object of Reaſon. The Senſes, being upon even tearms, may more reaſonably combate each other in that caſe,

than the whole of Senſe deny a ſingle exercise of Reaſon; becauſe Reaſon is a faculty more certain, and much ſuperiour to it. And if ever the faculty of our Reaſon abſtracted from Senſe, can make us ſure of any thing, 'tis in this caſe, about a *Supreme Being*. For in our ſelves we find an apprehenſion ſtill of ſomewhat above us: a fear of him, and a tendency towards him; which muſt needs ariſe from ſome *innate Idea* we have in our Souls, of him. And this we are as ſure of, as that *we think*; which is the thing, in the World, we can be moſt ſure of. And theſe impreſſions of God, and the *Idea* we have in our ſelves of ſuch a Supreme Being, does as much aſſure us, there is one; as our thinking does aſſure us that we our ſelves are, and that we have a thinking faculty. If we look out into the World, we ſhall find the *whole* (to our Reaſon) a moſt demonſtrable effect of him. There can be nothing more plain to the Reaſon of Mankind, than that there muſt be ſome *firſt Cauſe* of every Being we ſee; and ſome firſt mover of all the Motion we behold. The Atheiſt is alſo further diſingenuous in this: that, becauſe he does not ſee God, (though there be never ſo much evidence of his Being) therefore he poſitively denies him, and ſayes, *there is none*; which there may be,

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for ought he knows. No Man can, in the negative, ſay, *there is not*: nor lay down any tolerable ground to conclude ſuch a negative upon; becauſe there is not the leaſt violence offered to our faculties, nor the leaſt abſurdity, either to Senſe or Reaſon, in this Aſſertion, *That there is a Supreme Being Infinitely Perfect, that made all things.* Nor will the Atheiſt help himſelf at all, by retorting this, and ſaying; *If no Man can poſitively deny the Being of what he never ſaw; then we can never, by that Rule, deny the Atheiſts Hypotheſis of Atoms, or of the Worlds Eternity: for they are all things alike unſeen.* This I utterly deny: for, 'twere to make all things, we do not ſee, upon equal terms of Probation and Negation. Which were, upon the matter, to depoſe our Reaſon, and degenerate wholly into Senſe. As if the Notion of God's making the World, (to which every thing rationally concurs,) and the firſt riſe of it (ſuppoſed to be by the *caſual hit of two Flints* together, or a *juſtling of Atoms* one againſt another, or the fooliſheſt propoſition you can make) ſtood upon equal terms of admittance with a Rational Soul. And that one of theſe may be as well affirmed as the other:

and none of them certainly denied, because none of them *seen*. This is very absurd, and in its tendency plainly banishes Reason out of the World. *Probation* and *Negation*, in this and all other cases, are necessarily conjoyned, and depend upon each other. For if one thing can be *better proved* than another, then 'tis *less to be denied* than another. And as the Affirmative of any thing appears more reasonable, the Negative of it must needs be the more unreasonable. And all things that *we see not* (as well as those *we see*) are capable of more or less probability, and more or less certainty to our Reason; and so have necessarily the same degrees in their Affirmations and Negations that all other things have. The way obviously to clear this, is to consider, Whether a Man may be certain of any thing he does not see; or whether all things unseen are alike uncertain? If the first be made good, the second I am sure is thereby rendred false: That a Man may be certain of things he never saw, I affirm, and that several ways: *morally* certain; *naturally* certain; and *mathematically* certain.

First, *Morally certain*. A Man, by the concurrence of all Circumstances and credible

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Teſtimonies about it, may be morally certain there is ſuch a *City as Rome*, though he were never there. And if he ſhould deny the Certainty of it to himſelf, muſt either violently aſſault his own Faculties, or render himſelf viſibly impotent, and inſufficient in the exerciſe of them. The ground of this *moral certainty*, and the Reaſon why, by credible Teſtimonies, I may arrive at a Certainty in ſuch a way, is; becauſe, that taking a meaſure of others by what I find in my ſelf, or by what I ſee experimentally in the daily practice of Men, and in the courſe of the World, and in the Reaſon of the thing it ſelf, ſuch a Teſtimony muſt needs be true. Now ſuppoſe ſome, upon their own ſingle credit, ſhall tell a Man of a Town built upon the *Waves*, and ſtanding in the midſt of the Sea; and that by *Chance* the Waves rowl ſo continually under it, as to keep it from ſinking, and ſo it continually Swims: will any Man (well in his Wits) ſay, that a *negative* to this, and a Negative to the being of ſuch a place as *Rome*, are upon even terms? And that a Man that has ſeen neither, may not upon better terms deny the one than the other?

Secondly, I may be *naturally* certain of ſomewhat I do not ſee, by the fixedneſs and

and none of them certainly denied, becauſe none of them *ſeen*. This is very abſurd, and in its tendency plainly baniſhes Reaſon out of the World. *Probation* and *Negation*, in this and all other caſes, are neceſſarily conjoyned, and depend upon each other. For if one thing can be *better proved* than another, then 'tis *leſs to be denied* than another. And as the Affirmative of any thing appears more reaſonable, the Negative of it muſt needs be the more unreaſonable. And all things that *we ſee not* (as well as thoſe *we ſee*) are capable of more or leſs probability, and more or leſs certainty to our Reaſon; and ſo have neceſſarily the ſame degrees in their Affirmations and Negations that all other things have. The way obviouſly to clear this, is to conſider, Whether a Man may be certain of any thing he does not ſee; or whether all things unſeen are alike uncertain? If the firſt be made good, the ſecond I am ſure is thereby rendred falſe: That a Man may be certain of things he never ſaw, I affirm, and that ſeveral ways: *morally* certain; *naturally* certain; and *mathematically* certain.

Firſt, *Morally certain*. A Man, by the concurrence of all Circumſtances and credible Teſti-

Teſtimonies about it, may be morally certain there is ſuch a *City as Rome*, though he were never there. And if he ſhould deny the Certainty of it to himſelf, muſt either violently aſſault his own Faculties, or render himſelf viſibly impotent, and inſufficient in the exerciſe of them. The ground of this *moral certainty*, and the Reaſon why, by credible Teſtimonies, I may arrive at a Certainty in ſuch a way, is; becauſe, that taking a meaſure of others by what I find in my ſelf, or by what I ſee experimentally in the daily practice of Men, and in the courſe of the World, and in the Reaſon of the thing it ſelf, ſuch a Teſtimony muſt needs be true. Now ſuppoſe ſome, upon their own ſingle credit, ſhall tell a Man of a Town built upon the *Waves*, and ſtanding in the midſt of the Sea; and that by *Chance* the Waves rowl ſo continually under it, as to keep it from ſinking, and ſo it continually Swims: will any Man (well in his Wits) ſay, that a *negative* to this, and a Negative to the being of ſuch a place as *Rome*, are upon even terms? And that a Man that has ſeen neither, may not upon better terms deny the one than the other?

Secondly, I may be *naturally* certain of ſomewhat I do not ſee, by the fixedneſs and

and intrinſick certainty of Nature in its Cauſes and Productions. I am *naturally certain* I have thoughts and reaſon; and yet they are no-way the object of Senſe. I am naturally certain I was begotten by a Man, and brought forth by a Woman. If any man will tell me, I was begotten by a Fly; or that a Whirlwind caſually blew ſome Duſt together, and that, by that Matter and Motion, I came by Chance to be made: becauſe I never *ſaw* the one more than the other, have I no more Reaſon to deny the one than the other? If I can prove by Reaſon, that the World could not be brought forth by the *caſual motion of Atoms*; nor be Eternal in the poſture it now is, (which it muſt have been, if it be Eternal;) have not I more Reaſon to deny thoſe Things, than an Atheiſt has to deny the Being of God, that hath a full conjunction of Reaſon to prove it; becauſe they are all things *unſeen*?

Thirdly, I may be *Mathematically certain* of a thouſand Propoſitions, which I only revolve in my Thoughts, and were never viſibly repreſented to my Senſes: and am as well able to judge of an abſurdity in my Thoughts and my Mind, and to affirm and deny things of that nature,

ture, as if I ſaw the lines viſibly drawn before me. So 'tis in all ſpeculative matters: and in all other matters, things unſeen muſt be judged of by things ſeen, and according to things known; and ſo are more or leſs probable, according to the proportion they bear to our Reaſon exerciſed about ſuch things. Reaſon has been ever the ſame; and the great Standard to determine all things by. What is an *Abſurdity* now, was ever ſo ſince the World began, and will continue ſo. Reaſon will as well determine about matters we never ſaw, as about things viſible to our Senſes. He that will tell me of *a* Caſtle built upon a Bulruſh, and a Steeple upon the foundation of a Straw; my Reaſon will ſoon give him an Anſwer, and look no further. Nor ought bare Probabilities, where there is no apparent Abſurdity to ſteer us at all. But in the Atheiſts caſe, his Aſſertions are not *Poſſibilities*: for, if our faculties be not fallible, and deceive us, they are *poſitive Abſurdities*. I ſay, bare Poſſibilities ought not to ſteer us at all: becauſe a bare Poſſibility is not any thing that appears to us to have any actual Exiſtence; but only a reſult from this Negative, that ['*tis not a Contradiction, and ſo, not impoſſible.*] From whence we may deduce endleſs *Chimeraes*,

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and all the fooliſh fancies imaginable. A Man, in that caſe, is bounded with *nothing* but a *flat contradiction*; and ſo may intangle himſelf with all the *poſſible fooleries* that can be in the World. 'Tis poſſible, that Trees do hear when we ſpeak, and that Stones do ſee us and look upon us; 'tis not impoſſible, becauſe 'tis not a contradiction. But to make ſuch things to have any Power to influence or guide the rational Soul, were highly to reproach our Faculties, and to make them ſo weak and unſtedfaſt, as that the uſe of them would be thereby rendred far beneath what it truly and really is. Bare poſſibility ought not to entangle us in our aſſent or diſſent to any thing: becauſe 'tis poſitively nothing; does not *ponere aliquid*; but has only a bare negative ſuppoſition of exiſtence, in not being impoſſible. 'Tis poſſible a Plant or Vegetable may have a rational Soul: becauſe 'tis not a contradiction, and ſo not impoſſible; though we ſee no effects or concomitants of a Rational Soul in it. But, whoever ſhould let this *bare poſſibility* ſteer him, would much affront the certainty of his Reaſon, which ought not, by ſuch a poſſibility, to be hindred from the certain knowledg of the nature of a Plant: becauſe that were to imagine Reaſon to

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be ruled by a *may-be*, a *naked poſſibility* (which is a *non-entity*) againſt what really and actually *is*. He that comes only with a bare poſſibility, to confute me in any thing for which I bring proof, and give good Reaſon, comes *with juſt nothing*: becauſe all things *poſſible* to be, are no way *neceſſary* to be. That were to make a contradiction neceſſary: becauſe things may be, and may not be; and therefore where there is no actual demonſtration that they *be*, the poſſibility lies equal on both ſides, and is determined by the proofs on either ſide. Poſſibility is only previous to proof, and admits it, but is no proof at all it ſelf. Impoſſibility forbids all proof; poſſibility makes way for it, and does no more. This will appear evidently true, [that bare naked poſſibility is no Argument at all: nor is of any force, ſingly, either to prove or deny a thing;] if we do but conſider, that if *poſſibility* were any proof, then in all things where there is *poſſibility* on both ſides, there were good proof on both ſides; which to ſay, were to make our faculties falſe and a moſt notorious abſurdity, [*that a thing might be proved to be, and proved not to be.*] For 'tis not, whether there be poſſibility on both ſides; for that there is; and that is no more than

than to ſay, if a thing be, or if it be not, there is no contradiction either way, and ſo no impoſſibility either way. But if Poſſibility be made of any force to affirm or deny a thing, than poſſibility is ſuppoſed to make a proof: and then it muſt needs make it both wayes; and prove a thing may be, and prove a thing may not be, becauſe 'tis both ways poſſible. 'Tis plain therefore, that bare poſſibility is no proof at all any way: and whenever the Atheiſt recurs to bare *Poſſibility* to help him, he recurs to meer *Nullity*. He ſays, a thing *is*, becauſe it *may be*, and *'tis not*, becauſe it *may not be*: which (as to the proof of it, either way, either to its being, or not being) amounts to juſt nothing. In ſome caſes, Impoſſibility proved of the one ſide, carries Neceſſity on the other ſide. But whatſoever leaves things in ſuch an *Equilibrium* as Poſſibility does, (which ſays, they may be, or they may not be) can never certainly prove the *being* of them either way.

The *diſingenuity* of the Atheiſt will alſo further appear to us, if we conſider, that he himſelf admits Inviſibility and Infinity in his own ſuppoſed notions about the World; and yet objects againſt them, when they are aſcribed to God. He admits them in ſubjects we know are no way capable of them;

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and yet denies them, when they are moſt properly attributed to one Supreme Being Infinitely Perfect. He that will ſuppoſe *Matter*, with an inherent *Motion* in it, *Infinite*, muſt needs ſuppoſe it to have all poſſible Perfection. For whatſoever has *Infiniteneſs* and *ſelf-origination*, muſt needs ſwallow up all Perfection into it ſelf; or elſe no Being were capable of Perfection. Now let us once exclude the Notion of God out of the World, and where will you (with any tolerable Senſe, and without apparent abſurdities) place *Infinity* with abſolute Perfection? The Notion we have in our minds of ſuch a thing, plainly tells us there is ſuch a thing. And our Reaſon aſſures us, it can be fixed no-where, but in a Supreme Being, which we call God. The World is, in its conſtitution, ſuch a thing, and ſo related to God, that the greateſt ſhifters off of Divinity cannot give any tolerable account of the being of it to any reaſonable Creature, without appropriating thoſe things, they moſt find fault with, and cavil at in the Notion of God, to ſome part of the World. Either they make the World *Infinite* juſt as it is; or elſe ſome ſmall *particles of matter* with an *inherent Motion* in them, they muſt be Eternal. This ſhews a *neceſſity of Eternity* ſomewhere: and that all things that

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are, muſt needs come from ſomewhat that ever was, by the Judgment of every Rational Creature; and that all Mankind have naturally a Notion and Idea of Eternity within them. So that whoever denies the Being of God, when he goes to give a Reaſon of his denial, is forced to confeſs and admit thoſe things, which, he ſayes, are the grounds of his denyal: and ſo makes it a thing not only of the very ſame, but of ten times greater difficulty to believe, there is no God, than to confeſs there is one. For when he goes about to give a Reaſonable Account, how the World could come to be without ſome firſt Cauſe; he is forced to admit all thoſe things he himſelf objects againſt a firſt Cauſe; and beſides, lies under all thoſe abſurdities the Being of the World will caſt upon our Reaſons, when we go about to give an account of it, excluding the Notion of a God and a firſt Cauſe from it.

And as the Atheiſt is exceeding diſingenuous in his Principles and Objections, ſo he is monſtrouſly *unreaſonable*: *Firſt*, In this that he aſcribes the World to Cauſes that have the higheſt *improbability*, and (in ſome caſes) *impoſſibility*, to our Reaſon, plainly attending them. *Firſt*, 'Tis plainly *impoſſible* that the World in the courſe we now ſee it, ſhould have been Eternal, according to

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that *Idea* our Souls are able to make of Eternity. For though we are not able to give a full deſcription of what is Eternal; yet we are able to ſay *negatively* what we are ſure cannot be Eternal. Suppoſe Eternity to be never ſo much beyond me, and above me; yet 'twere abſurd for me to admit any thing to be Eternal, that does not reach the Notion I have of Eternity.

But grant to the Atheiſt the moſt he pretends to; which is, that there is a bare *poſſibility* that the World *may* have been Eternal; and that there is no contradiction to ſay ſo; I think I have fully proved, that *bare poſſibility* is no proof at all; nor ought to have the leaſt ſway with any reaſonable Man, in the affirmation or negation of any thing. And therefore when the Atheiſt recurs (as generally he doth) to bare poſſibility to ſupport his Notions, he is driven beyond the confines of all rational proof, and endeavours to make ſomething of an abſolute nothing. He takes that for proof, which only gives an admiſſion that there may be proof.

Take him in the other way, in the Notion of his *Atoms*, from whence he will needs derive the World: what an Aſpect

doth it carry to our Reaſon? *to imagine that Atoms, in a fancied vacuity, had an Eternal gravity in them, which cauſed an Eternal Motion of them up and down, without any tendency at all to a Center? and that they could never ceaſe their Motion, till they hit by Chance one againſt another, and were diverted that way? that this dull matter, and this ſenſleſs motion in it, cauſed by the Internal Gravity of it, did by Chance produce this Glorious Fabrick of a rational Soul? and ſo did tranſfer that to another, which it had not firſt in it ſelf? And that by the Chance and Caſuality of the Motion of theſe* Atoms, *the World, and all the Order and Harmony of it, was firſt produced.* The Atheiſt, in this, will never arrive at bare poſſibility. For the whole of it (ſo far as it is urged againſt God's making the World, and made uſe of to ſelf-originate the World) is a perfect *Syſteme of Nonſenſe.* He that ſayes the World was made by Chance, does, in effect ſay, [*He cannot tell how it was made: and that when we deny God to be the Author of it, we can give no reaſonable account of it.*] The Atheiſt is alſo further unreaſonable, becauſe he denies the Being of that, which the World is a plain Effect of, and the Contemplation of the whole World doth rationally lead us unto. He denies alſo that to be, which we have an in-

nate

nate Notion of in our own Souls, which is, a Supreme Being, abſolutely Perfect: which the whole World will not afford us, nor can we fix our Notion of it upon any thing viſible. The capacity a Man has, ſome way to conceive of ſuch a thing as a Supreme and Perfect Being, doth evidently declare there is ſuch a Being that gave that capacity. He that goes about either to doubt it, or deny it, muſt in ſome meaſure admit it, or elſe he doubts and denies he knows not what. For when any Man diſputes againſt a thing, 'tis granted he has a capacity to conceive of ſuch a thing, or elſe he could not oppoſe it. Had there not been a Supreme Being which we call God, there could never have been any innate Notions of it in the minds of Men, in Fears, Hopes and Concerns about him, as ſuch. No Man ever had an *original innate impreſſion of a lye*, a pure nothing upon his intellect. That were to ſay, our faculties were originally falſe: and ſo we are nothing but a great deceit to our ſelves. Nay, to this day, no Man ever thought of a meer Nothing. Thoughts and Exiſtence are relatives! *Non entis nulla cogitatio.* The wildeſt *Fantaſms* that ever poſſeſſed the minds of Men, were yet ſtill converſant about ſomewhat that was real and had exiſtence: and were but

diſordered and miſplaced by the fancy. Let a Man imagin Oxen feeding in the bottom of the Sea: and Whales grazing upon dry ground; or Mountains dancing in the Air; or any thing of that kind: the ground of all theſe imaginations is real things, and ſuch as do exiſt. They are only diſlocated by the fancy, and diſpoſed by the mind contrary to the courſe of Nature: and ſo (in that diſpoſition and conjunction) are meer *fantaſms*, and *entia rationis*. But this we call an *Idea* of God, is quite another thing; 'Tis not a fictitious repreſentation the mind makes to it ſelf, from a collection of viſible Objects, and corporeal fantaſms; but 'tis a Notion of a Being abſtractedly conſidered, from whatever came in by the Senſes; which can be no other but an *Idea* placed originally in the Soul, by an Infinite and Perfect Being that firſt made it. A Man finds in his own Soul, he can conceive there is ſuch a Being, but yet cannot deſcribe him by any thing he ever ſaw. By which 'tis plain, the Notion of ſuch a Being came not in by the Senſes. Whatever is the Object of Senſe, hath infirmity annexed to it, becauſe 'tis ſtill diviſible; and therefore a Notion of Abſolute and Infinite Perfection could not ariſe from thence. Nor is it poſſible to believe, that ever Mankind ſhould bow

bow down themſelves, in that ſubjection they are in to the Notion of a Deity, if the Notion of it were nothing but a vain fancied collection of things diſorderly together, in the mind, that had come in by the Senſes. For they muſt needs know by the uſe of their Reaſon, that ſuch things had no Exiſtence in ſuch Conjunction, but were a perfect Vanity. Nor is there, in the Notion of God, any unnatural diſorderly conjunction of things together: but all thoſe Attributes we aſcribe to God, do naturally and neceſſarily make up the Notion of him, and cannot be ſeparated from it. Several ſteps our pure Naturals take towards a Supreme Being, to ſatisfie and confirm us in the unreaſonableneſs of an Atheiſt.

Firſt, Our Reaſon conſiders the whole World is without a firſt Cauſe of any thing; and yet the Conſtitution of it, is ſuch, that without ſome firſt Cauſe, we can give no reaſonable account of any thing. We can never reaſonably be ſatisfied, how Men ſhould come to beget one another in the way we ſee, without ſome firſt Man that was *not begotten* in that way, Which firſt Man muſt neceſſarily conduct us to ſome firſt and Supreme Cauſe.

Secondly, Reaſon conſiders it ſelf the Supremeſt part of the World: and knows, by its own exerciſe, it could not be begotten by it ſelf. For that were to contradict its ſelf, and deny its own Evidence. And ſo comes to adore ſomewhat above it ſelf, and more excellent than it ſelf; of which it has a natural *inbred Idea*.

Thirdly, Reaſon layes down this as a fundamental *Maxim* to it ſelf; That whatever we are able to think or imagine, of abſolute Goodneſs, Perfection, Infiniteneſs, or Excellency of any kind, it muſt neceſſarily exiſt in this *firſt Cauſe*; who gave us this ability to think and conceive of ſuch things, and made us with ſuch an Idea. So that to the utmoſt of what a Man can do, to think well of God, and highly to adore him, his Reaſon leads him to; and he can go no further.

Fourthly, 'Tis highly reaſonable to conclude, that he that was the firſt *Donor* of our Beings, muſt needs have an abſolute *property* in us; and ſo we lye under an obligation to all the Homage we are able to perform. Becauſe the donation of a Being to us, is the Supremeſt Obligation that could be put upon us. And whatſoever this

Supreme

Supreme Being, that gave us our own Being, ſhall at any time reveal to us to be his pleaſure about us, we ſtand for ever obliged to Obey and Submit to.

Fifthly, Our Reaſon tells us, that whatſoever we can conceive of the wiſeſt Builder, muſt be much more in God's framing the World. He would not make the World without ſome propoſed end; which could be no other but what beſt pleaſed himſelf. That Faculty, that informs us of a Supreme Power that made the World, will alſo aſcertain us that he can uphold it, will govern it; and at laſt, have an account of it, according to that end he firſt propoſed to himſelf in making it.

Sixthly, We find in our own Souls, a diſtinguiſhing taſte of Good and Evil; and a Judgment we neceſſarily, and naturally paſs upon our ſelves, in reference to the one, and the other; being much ſatisfied in the one, and filled with Terrours and Fears by the other. And our Reaſon tells us, all this muſt needs be, in order to a *Supreme Judgment* above us; and was placed in us, by a *Supreme Being* that firſt made us. Were there nothing above our ſelves, we could have no higher end than to pleaſe our

ſelves. When Men find, in their own Souls, Troubles ariſing from thoſe Actions that pleaſe them moſt, and which are no way cognizable, nor puniſhable perhaps in this World; that plainly relates it ſelf to ſomewhat above and beyond themſelves. The truth is, our own Souls determine, within our ſelves, the great end of all our Actions to be pleaſing or diſpleaſing to God.

Seventhly, and laſtly, In full anſwer to the Atheiſts Objection: my Reaſon will tell me that *God's being not ſeen by me*, ſhould no way hinder, but further my belief of his Being and Exiſtence.

Firſt, Becauſe I find enough in mine own Make and Conſtitution to inform me of Him; *naturally* an inbred fear of Him; an admiration of Him, attendency ſtill toward Him; of which I am as ſure, as that I am ſure *I think*; which is the ſureſt Evidence I can have, that *I am*; and an ability, in mine own underſtanding, to *Reaſon* all the World up to Him, and derive all things from Him.

Secondly, When I conſider that this Supreme Being does neceſſarily exiſt, He muſt then be Infinite; (for God and Infinite are inſeparate.) And if He be Infinite, He muſt alſo

alſo then be Inviſible to a Finite Being. If He were viſible to any thing *finite*, He could not himſelf be Infinite, and then He could not be God. How abſurd therefore to our Reaſon is it, to deſire to *ſee ſuch a Being* as we aſcribe to God! I cannot graſp Infinite in my mind; much leſs then can I make it the Object of my ſight. Infinite could not be Infinite, were it any way comprehenſible. Mine Eye cannot view the whole World at once, which yet is Finite and circumſcribed: much leſs, what is boundleſs and Infinite. 'Tis a mean and narrow deſign, to confine the Notion of God and his Being to our *Eye-ſight*, when we have ſo much a nobler capacity to give us a view of Him. Eſpecially when we conſider we cannot ſee the nobleſt part of our ſelves, which is our own Souls: nor are we able to converſe by our *Sight* with ſuch things, as are proper Objects for it, but we are ſoon at a loſs. We cannot look upon the Heavenly Bodies, ſo as to incompaſs their dimenſions in our Eye-ſight. What ſmall things are the Sun, Moon and Stars, to him that is no otherwiſe informed than by his Eyes? The leaſt diſtance out-does our ſight, and deceives us. And yet nothing will ſerve the Atheiſt but an *ocular view of an Infinite Being*. 'Twere much more practicable

ble and reaſonable to ſay, he would not believe there was ſuch a thing as the *Sea*, unleſs he could take it up in the Palm of his Hand. Nor will not be ſatisfied that the Sun is a body of Light, by the Beams of it, unleſs he can put it into a Lanthorn.

This diſcovers to us the grounds of that *natural Religion* that directly oppoſeth an Atheiſt in the whole of his undertaking. The Fundamentals of this *natural Religion* are fixed, and ſecured: *Firſt*, In that original Impreſſion God left of himſelf, upon us at our firſt make. And *Secondly*, In the true exerciſe of that faculty, we call Reaſon. 'Tis this natural Univerſal Religion by which God intended to uphold the Frame and Being of the World: and without which, it cannot ſubſiſt. Here ought Uniformity to be expected, and ſtrictly required. Things Supernatural have not had that Univerſality; but have been the peculiar happineſs and advantage of ſome times, and ſome places: and are not *eſſentially* neceſſary to the Frame and Being of the World.

Nor will the Atheiſt, in the leaſt, invalidate the truth of this *natural Religion*, by ſaying, *There are very few that have ſuch an exerciſe*

exerciſe of Reaſon as to arrive at ſuch Principles. For when we ſay any thing is reaſonable, we need ſay no more of it, than that it is attainable by Reaſon. We ſpeak of what is vertually in that Principle, what it may do: not what every individual Man does in the exerciſe of it. What is in it ſelf intrinſically reaſonable, and will appear ſo to Men when they make uſe of their Reaſon, we may well call reaſonable, though there be never ſo few that attain to an underſtanding of it. How many Concluſions are there in *Geometry*, and *Mathematicks*, that are in themſelves perfectly reaſonable and true, and will appear ſo to every Mans Reaſon, when he will make a right uſe of it: And yet there are perhaps, at the preſent, very few in the World that underſtand them. And were he not a very vain Man, that would therefore deny the Reaſon of them, and ſo conſequently admit nothing to be reaſonable or true, but what every individual Perſon actually comprehends and aſſents to?

Thus, *my Lord*, I have led you through a *Wilderneſs*; a diſcourſe unpoliſhed; without the common high-ways of *Method*, and ſuch *artificial Ornaments*, as we have to pleaſe us, in thoſe places where we chuſe

to

to live, beyond what we find where we are ſometimes forced to *travel*. When you reflect upon the Journey you have had through theſe Papers, I can provide nothing to make you admit it tolerably pleaſant; but to tell you, that you have all the way, ſeen a *Piller of Fire*, and *Pillar of Cloud*: you have ſeen a dark-ſide, and a light-ſide; the *Atheiſts dark-ſide*, the Cloud of Abſurdity and Folly that hangs over him; how weak that Man is, that fights againſt God: his own Reaſon diſarms him, and he becomes a Captive to himſelf. You have ſeen a *light-ſide* alſo, thoſe clear perſpicuous Evidences we have of God: and that he walks not in the dark; but has lighted us to himſelf, by the bright beams of our Underſtandings: and has commiſſioned the *meaneſt Creature* we converſe with, and made it his Ambaſſadour to treat with us about him; and written his *Credential Characters* upon the whole World, and given it in charge to declare his Being. This we have made Canonical by two good Authors; *David* tells us, *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Firmament ſheweth his handy-work*. And St. *Paul* delivers it as a great Oracle of Divine Truth, *That the inviſible things of God from the Creation of the World, are clearly ſeen, being underſtood*

by

by the things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead. In Man, above all the reſt, he has fixed a perpetual Memorial of himſelf; and obliged him to a peculiar adherence to his Creator, in that he has honoured him with *his Image*; that ſo he ſhould never deny his God, but he ſhould fall below himſelf: nor *blaſpheme* that ſupreme Being, without *defiling* his own. He has ſtamped his Image and Superſcription upon Man, that ſo he might know whoſe he is, and to whom, as a due tribute, he ought ſtill to render himſelf. That Divine Spark, that heavenly Image, that rational Soul, is that nobleſt part of the World, wherein God chiefly inthrones himſelf, and by which he puts in his claim to the whole that he has made. Nor can Man (that is ſo qualified, that finds a tincture of Divinity in his compoſition; that carries about him ſuch internal rays of rational Light, and moves under that conduct, when he is truly himſelf) ever make this viſible World his ultimate Center. The more vigorous and enlarged the Soul is, the ſooner it ſurfeits with the *whole* of the World: and when it has tried the utmoſt of it, denies it ſelf ſatisfied, and claims a relation to ſomewhat above it, and beyond it. Had the *whole* of the World been for ever nothing but a continued

circle

circle of it ſelf; were Mankind at the top of their *Pedigree* in things viſible; could they derive themſelves no higher than bare *matter* and *motion*, the Mind could never travel beyond thoſe confines. Were this World the higheſt *Original* of Man, it muſt needs contain his *ultimate* ſatisfaction, and be the perfect boundary of his Soul. No Cauſe ever produced an Effect with a principle beyond it ſelf; nor did ever any Man preſs after that, which he had not firſt an *Idea* of in his own breaſt. The World could never ſtamp any Character upon its Offſpring but it ſelf; nor propagate a *Genius* above its own: nor can it further thoſe *noble Sallies* the Soul makes beyond it. The tendency we are made with to a ſupreme and perfect Being, plainly tells us, ſuch a Being does exiſt. Whenever we deny thoſe tranſparant effects of a Deity in our ſelvs; and would cancel that innate *Idea* God has left of himſelf within us; and make a nullity of thoſe hopes and fears we find relating to ſomewhat above us; we may with equal reaſon oppoſe the truth of our own Affections and Paſſions, and ceaſe to be ſure of whatever our Souls inform us. And while we contend againſt the real Exiſtence of a ſupreme Being, we deny the truth of our own faculties. For whatever

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can aſcertain us there is no God, may go far to aſſure us that we are in our own beings, *nothing but a great Cheat to our ſelves.*

My Lord, I have now taken my leave of the Atheiſt. What the ſucceſs of our Encounter has been, reſts with you to determine. I know there is an *Exciſe and Cuſtom* to be payed to the *Criticks* of this Age, before any thing can freely paſs; of which I am no way careful. I mean hereafter to be as little concerned about the *Atheiſt*, as he can be about Religion: and to create no more trouble to my ſelf, where I have arrived at a perfect ſatisfaction. If nothing will ſerve his turn but *a Negative*, upon that, which himſelf and every thing beſides is an Affirmation of, let him feed upon his own Diſtemper, and feaſt himſelf with his own Diſeaſe. 'Tis not to be denied, but that a Rational Conqueſt is there leaſt to be hoped for, where the Underſtanding is but a ſecond to the Will; and the rectitude of the Judgment truckles to the violence of inclination. No Map can be drawn, wherein we can have a clearer Proſpect, that a Man is ſunk beneath himſelf, and ſtruggles under a defection from a primative *Oeconomy*; than that his Will ſometimes gives the Law, and plays the Tyrant

over

over the reſt of his Faculties. 'Twas at this back door of the *Will*, that *Atheiſm* firſt entred. 'Twas the *deſire* Men had, there ſhould be no God, that firſt cheated the Underſtanding, or at leaſt bribed it, to diſpute againſt him. No Mans Reaſon would ever have attempted to derive the World from any thing but God, had not the *Will* been in open Hoſtility with him; and declared War againſt that Intereſt, that ſtood up for God in the Soul. However the *Atheiſt* may indulge himſelf in his own abſurdities; yet having weighed him in the Ballance of right Reaſon, and finding his Principles light, empty, full of falſhoods and contradictions; and in the complex of them, a *meer nothing*: I have taken him as one legally condemned, and do think my ſelf reaſonably juſtified *to hang him up in Effigie*. And therefore, as the moſt pertinent *Appendix* to this Diſcourſe, I have preſented *your Lordſhip* with an Atheiſts *Catechiſm*; wherein you ſhall ſee him *Epitomized*, and an endeavour to repreſent an *Image* of him, as much to the Life as ſo ſmall a Figure will afford.

My Lord, I have, by this, performed but a part of my Duty to you: my firſt intention did much exceed what I have been

yet

yet able to accompliſh. Two further attempts were deſigned to accompany theſe Papers. Firſt, *A rational proof, that the Scriptures are undoubtedly and truly the Word of God:* And that we have reaſon abundantly ſufficient to acquieſce in them as ſuch. Where I would have imployed that little ſtrength I have, to have reſcued them from ſome violent hands that are lately laid upon them; and juſtified their *divine Authority* againſt the perverſe Diſcourſe of abſurd and *illogical men.* And Secondly, Have adventured in a Scripture-glaſs, to have repreſented to you the excellency of that admirable contrivement, *Of ſaving men by* JESUS CHRIST: to which right Reaſon, as well as the Scripture, is an entire witneſs. Wherein we ſhall find all things concurring, that might become the deſigns of *infinite Wiſdom*, in magnifying it ſelf; and reach the whole of mens concerns, in the utmoſt of their Exaltation and Happineſs. How far opportunity will ever encourage the execution of the firſt intentions; whether I ſhall be able to advance another ſtep beyond this ground I have been now endeavouring to make good; is a queſtion lies unreſolved in the Womb of *Futurity.* What has already adventured your

Lordships view, this *small Essay* towards the publick service of Religion, I am sure you will at the same time pardon and accept. As you are too just to blame a mean crop, when you consider it comes from an hungry Soil; so you are too wise to waste expectation, where you must needs be denyed a return; or to cast away the least hope of any thing valuable, from one that has attained no further amongst Mankind, than that *inconsiderable Roman*, who had nothing to boast of, but *a jus trium liberorum*. 'Tis enough to my self, I have obeyed *your Lordship*; who by the choice of this Subject, did at once both command and oblige me. It will be ever a pleasure to me any way to avow those manifold Obligations I have to you: nor will I ever cease to do it. Resolving never to forfeit my own Truth to my self, nor to become a sufferer under that uneasie reproach of Ingratitude.

An

An Atheiſt's CATECHISM.

Queſt.

DO you believe there is a God?

A. *No: I believe there is none.*

Q. What is the true ground of your belief?

A. *Becauſe I have no mind there ſhould be one.*

Q. What other Reaſon do you give for it?

A. *Becauſe I never ſaw him.*

Q. If there be a God, muſt he not be Infinite, and ſo Inviſible?

A. *Yes, if there be one, he muſt.*

Q. Why then do you demand to ſee him?

A. *Becauſe I know I cannot ſee him, and ſo may have a ſure ground to deny him.*

Q. If there be no God, how came this World to be?

A. *It made it self by meer chance.*

Q. After what manner was it first pieced together?

A. *By a casual hit of Atoms one against another.*

Q. How came those Atoms so to hit one against another?

A. *As they were Eternally dancing about, in an Infinite space.*

Q. Whence came the Reason of Mankind; and all that order and regularity we find in the World?

A. *From the meer accidental conjunction of those Atoms.*

Q. What is that Men call Religion?

A. *A politick Cheat put upon the World.*

Q. Who were the first contrivers of this Cheat?

A. *Some cunning-Men that designed to keep the World in Subjection and Awe.*

Q. What was the first ground of it?

A. *Men were frighted with Tales, that were told them, about invisible nothings.*

Q. When did this fright first seize Men?

A, *'Tis very long ago: and (for ought we can find) 'tis as old as the World it self.*

Q. Has this fright upon Men been general?

A. *Yes: The whole World in all Ages of it, have been possessed with a fear of nothing.*

Q.

Q. What is the great end that every Man is to live to?

A. *To pleaſe himſelf.*

Q. How prove you that?

A. *Becauſe there is nothing above him: and ſo he is his own Law.*

Q. Are Men to make any diſtinction in their Actions?

A. *No further, nor upon no other account, but as they pleaſe or diſpleaſe themſelves.*

Q. Is there any ſuch thing as Good and Evil?

A. *No; 'tis a diſtinction the World hath been cozened with.*

Q. When was that diſtinction firſt brought into the World?

A. *'Tis of the ſame date with thoſe fables about a Deity; and relates wholly to them.*

Q. Is there any thing for a Man to hope for, or ſtand in fear of beyond this World?

A. *No, nothing at all.*

Q. What becomes of a Man when he dies?

A. *He returns into his firſt Atoms.*

Q. What becomes of thoſe Atoms?

A. *They ſtill help to carry on the great round of the World.*

FINIS.

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